

562 rings and four pieces of flowered silk. He ordered his
173 officials to build her a seven-storied mansion at Lien-
ch'eng. She was also presented with an inscription
reading "She displayed faithfulness," and given a grant
of fifty *ch'ing* of land, the revenues of which were to
provide her with "toilet expenses," the Chinese expres-
sion equivalent to the English "pin money." The grant
of land, according to the family chronicle of the Lu
T'u-ssu, was in the country of *chun ku erh*.¹³ There are
also legends of the bravery of the Monguor women
during the great Muslim rebellion who joined in the
battle just as their husbands were beginning to re-
treat, and thus turned defeat into victory. According
to popular tradition, it was for this exploit that the
emperor himself designed the costume that Monguor
women wear on ceremonial occasions, including a sleeve-
less "military" jacket, military skirt, and a miniature
shield and spear as part of the headdress.

562 In spite of all these legendary tributes to their ability,
however, Monguor women do not play a conspicuous
part in politics or administration; with the exception,
already noted, that when a T'u-ssu dies leaving a son
who has not come of age, the boy's mother acts as regent.

604 THE MATERNAL UNCLE

The relationship between two families connected by
marriage is most clearly seen in the role of the maternal
uncle, who while not a part of the family of his sister's
child exerts, nevertheless, a powerful influence over his
sister's child and over the family into which his sister's
child is born.

In discussing the role of the maternal uncle, I shall
divide my remarks into two parts, dealing first with the
most striking aspects of his role, and secondly with the
context in which these prominent aspects occur. Since
the facts which are to be presented have considerable
theoretical importance for the problem of possible matri-
archal survivals in a patriarchal kinship system, I shall
conclude my observations with a short theoretical
analysis.

604 764 Among the Monguors the special rights of the maternal
uncle were most vividly manifest in three circumstances:
(1) at the natural death of his sister's children (2) in
the event of their having been murdered or having
committed suicide, and (3) in situations where they
were subject to punishment.

¹³ These three Chinese syllables are one of the regular trans-
criptions of the Mongol term *jun gar*, "left hand" or "left wing."
This expression reflects the usual Mongol practice of dividing
territories and military organizations into a left (east) and a
right (west) wing (the south being "front" and the north
"back"). This expression is the origin of the name of the Jun-
gar Mongols, who were the "left wing" of the confederation of
Western Mongols in the region of the Altai mountains and the
northern part of Sinkiang Province which is therefore still
known, in the Western literature, as Jungaria or Zungaria. In
this case, however, the reference may be to land taken from some
of the Jungar Mongols who eventually migrated into the pastures
of the Tibetan plateau near the country of the Monguors.—C. L.

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764 A. The sister's children were not allowed to be buried without the permission of their maternal uncle.

When a member of the family died, a capable and outstanding man was invited to direct the preparation and the ceremonial of the funeral, and to send people to convey the obituary announcement to all the relatives. It was also his duty to call the deceased's maternal uncle or a member of the maternal uncle's family—e.g. his son or grandson. The maternal uncle was the "master of the bones"¹⁴ of the deceased, and he disposed of the right to permit the burial or to impede and obstruct it, even with violence; consequently he was to be treated with the utmost reverence and respect at that moment.

If the relations between the two families had been unfriendly and hostile before, the maternal uncle and his family did not miss the opportunity to pay off an old grudge, impeding or at least delaying the burial and causing excessive expense to the family. He would assert that the deceased had not been well cared for, that the funeral was too small for a mother who had borne six or more children, worked her fingers to the bone, and never enjoyed any sunshine during her life, although she had been a fine mother and good homemaker, etc. He would require the deceased's family to invite twenty or thirty lamas to pray for forty-nine days, to offer a certain amount of alms to a fixed number of lamasaries, to buy the most expensive grave-clothes for the deceased, etc. In such situations, it was the duty of the director of the funeral to settle the trouble, saving as much money for the family of the deceased as possible by displaying with prodigality the proficiency of his eloquence.

If the two families had always been friendly, on the day of the funeral, before the dinner, the director of the funeral made a speech before the maternal uncle, saying that the deceased had died a natural death, notwithstanding that two or three doctors had been invited and a large amount of money had been spent for medicine; that the whole family to the best of its abilities had tried to assuage the pains and suffering of the deceased, to be agreeable and helpful to him, securing him a happy death, etc. Finally he asked the maternal uncle to examine the deceased and to give the necessary permission for the burial. In localities where the Monguors were used to burying their dead in coffins, as do the Chinese, the eldest son of the deceased knelt during the speech, presenting to the maternal uncle a plate on which was placed a hammer and the wedges with which the cover of the coffin were to be fastened. The maternal uncle himself drove a couple of wedges, after which others completed the fastening. (The same custom exists among the Chinese.) The sons and grandsons

¹⁴ In both Mongol and Chinese usage, "bone" stands for the paternal and "flesh" for the maternal line of descent. Since the clan system was patrilineal, the body was referred to as "bones," even though the maternal uncle, who had jurisdiction in permitting burial, represented the "flesh" rather than the "bone" of the deceased.—O. L.

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784 knelt and prostrated themselves, thanking the deceased's maternal uncle.

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628 B. The maternal uncle was required to initiate and execute vengeance for the murder or suicide of his sister's child.

The duty to initiate and execute vengeance fell first on the brothers of the mother of the deceased—i.e. the deceased's maternal uncles—and only secondarily on the deceased's father, brothers, and other paternal kinsmen. Hence, the mother's brothers were the immediate protectors of the lives and well-being of their sister's children and it was they who stepped forward in the event that a man or woman had been murdered in his or her own family, or a married woman had been murdered or had committed suicide in the home of her parents-in-law.

To illustrate the way in which the maternal uncle operated as an avenger, and the relationships which he had with the various other relatives of the deceased, I shall draw on an actual case of suicide which I had the opportunity of observing at first hand.

In November 1915, in Lichiat'an ("the plain of the Li-family"), the daughter-in-law of Li Chin-ch'ün, born in the family of Ch'i, was found one morning hanging from a beam. She had had quarrels for many days with her mother-in-law and had been beaten by her husband. Li Chin-ch'ün, sick with fear and apprehension, and with a sense of impending doom, went in a hurry to see the chief of the village and the elders, and begged a man who was on intimate terms with the girl's maternal uncle to convey the terrible news and to invite him to come over in order to permit detachment of the body from the beam and to fix the date for the settlement of the trouble.

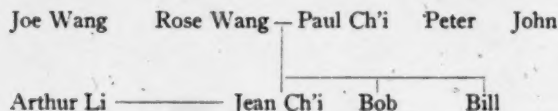
A hanging person was not allowed to be detached without permission of the "master of the bones." After the permission had been granted, a shaman was invited who adjured and cursed the evil spirit, feverishly cut the rope with his sword, undressed the victim and cut a small piece of flesh from the hips, which he swallowed. The victim was then deposited on the *k'ang*, or sleeping platform, to await burial after the troubles had been patched up and permission for the burial granted by the girl's maternal uncle.

During the night, with all possible haste, the Li family, aided by some friends and relatives, sent away for safe keeping its best animals and entrusted to these friends and relatives its most precious belongings—clothes, agricultural implements, etc. Hogs and sheep were killed and vast quantities of wine were prepared, in order to deal in the best way with the ill-disposed guests, for on an empty stomach trouble cannot be ironed out; empty bellies do not reason. To meet unknown contingencies which might arise, the father-in-law of the suicide borrowed money at usurious rates, mortgaged some fields, etc., for a suicide ruined a family completely, and there was a saying that: "The value of the life of a person

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who dies by his own hand, tallies with the whole wealth of the family."

In this concrete case, what relatives were involved? The relatives of the deceased girl, Jean Ch'i,¹⁵ are shown in the following genealogical chart:



Since Jean was the daughter of Rose Wang, Joe Wang, who is Rose's brother, was Jean's maternal uncle and was "the master of the bones" and had to lead the avengers. If Jean had had no real maternal uncle, the duty of leading the avengers would have fallen on her closest male relatives in her mother's lineage.

Since Jean was also the daughter of Paul Ch'i, Paul and his brothers and sons, and his paternal uncles and their sons and grandsons—the whole Ch'i family—were involved. They had to avenge the death of one of their members, but under the leadership of Joe Wang. They would have led the avengers only in default of Jean's maternal uncles.

On the other side, the whole Li family was involved, and with them the maternal uncles of Arthur Li, the husband of the suicide. The latter were invited to take up the cudgels in favor of Arthur and his father.

Thus four families were directly involved in the suicide—two on each side. The position of the avenging group was stronger, for they had a claim to see justice done; the position of the other group was the weaker because they were recognized as in the wrong. The first group emphasized the wickedness of the behavior of the Li family, in order to extort a severe atonement, and the other group tried to minimize the wrong, offering extenuating circumstances, in order to save Arthur and his father.

It should be noted that other families could have been indirectly involved in this case. Joe Wang, the avenger, could have asked his own maternal uncle to assist him, and in default of close members of Joe Wang's lineage, this maternal uncle would have assumed the role of "master of the bones." Similarly, Paul Ch'i could have asked assistance of his own maternal uncle.

On the other side, not only Arthur Li's maternal uncles but also his mother's maternal uncles, and his father's maternal uncles could have been asked to help in the defense.

In other words, aside from the maternal uncle of the deceased, the maternal uncles of any of the principals involved in the ensuing conflict were subject to an appeal for assistance and moral support, and, in the case of the chief avenger, for substitution in role.

It is also to be noted that in any of the clans involved—e.g. Ch'i, Wang, Li—family groups rather than entire

¹⁵ Given names are fictitious.

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clans participated. In this case, Jean Ch'i's brothers, father, father's brothers and the latter's sons were involved; in other cases, if the family of the defendant was wealthy, the aggrieved's grandfather, grandfather's brothers and their descendants joined the avenging group in the hopes of profiting during the impoverishment of the defendant's family. But this is usually the limit of involvement of any given clan.

To help himself in this tight spot, the father of Arthur Li invited the chief of the village and the elders to arbitrate the conflict, along with some influential men celebrated in the country for their eloquence and proficiency in the art of patching up troubles, and known to be on intimate terms with the members of the first group. These he promised a fine remuneration in case of success. Such were the actors in the drama which ensued.

On the day appointed for the settlement, the members of the Li family together with Arthur Li's maternal uncles and the chief and elders of the village, went outside the village to greet the "guests"—i.e. the members of the avenging group. They led a sheep whose horns were decorated with red paper and on whose back was bound a piece of red cotton cloth eight feet in length. With them they also took many firecrackers, to be fired in front of the guests as they returned the long way to the Li family's courtyard. This was the customary means for making a public apology.

But the guests did not show up, and for several days the Li family had to send them new invitations every day. This was Joe Wang's way of compelling the Li family to spend money and kill more animals for the invited elders, the rest of the Li relatives and Arthur Li's maternal uncles, who had to be treated with kindness and fed all during the time that Joe Wang was delaying his appearance.

Finally, after five days Joe Wang showed up with the Ch'i family and a retinue of forty or fifty men bearing clubs, etc. The whole Li family knelt and prostrated themselves to make public apology, but not a kind word was spoken by their former friends, who had now become the fiercest enemies. Entering the courtyard, the Wangs and the Ch'is went to see the victim lying on the *k'ang* unwashed and dirty, for no one was allowed to touch the victim before the case was settled. The stench lay heavy on the air, clogged the throat, and made the avengers clench their fists with rage. They breathed fire and brimstone against the Li family. The maternal uncle declared that he was coming to take vengeance, and like a bolt from the blue, he and his followers smashed all the windows and doors and tables and benches and jars and all kinds of tools; the chickens and the dog were clubbed; all the animals in the stables were driven away, etc., adding to the chaos and confusion. Babies squalled, children screamed, the daughters-in-law clutched their children to their breasts, and the whole Li family prostrated themselves, begging for

• 604 mercy. The avengers knew no compassion, and every
628 supplication was as a hot coal hissing on ice.

In the meantime the elders had tried to calm them down a little. The neighbors brought tea. The scolding, upbraiding, and cursing having subsided a bit, a dinner was offered. Again some of the avengers carped and complained about the quality of the food, etc. After dinner the palaver began again and went on through the whole night, with endless cursing.

The maternal uncle refused to announce his conditions for settling the trouble. The avenging group ate and drank its fill for three days, and still no solution, no headway was made.

On the fourth day the maternal uncle finally announced his conditions: the important living Buddha of Erh-kulung and 20 lamas should be invited to pray for 14 days for the victim; 1,000 pounds of butter should be offered, with an alms of 10,000 taels (ounces of silver) to the same lamasery; and 10,000 taels should be paid to the family of the suicide as atonement.

In the meantime the elders, knowing the ropes, and having the knack of acquiring information, had scanned the avenging group, recognized the most influential men among them, and had already invited them on three separate nights to their homes in order to enjoy a quiet sleep. Here they sounded them out concerning the mind of the maternal uncle about his final solution; some of them ultimately weakened and money was promised to them if they would see that the trouble was settled for a minor sum.

The maternal uncle, however, a very stubborn man, did not yield to the hints and suggestions of his friends. On the fifth day no solution had yet been reached.

It so happened that I was in the neighborhood and that two of the elders knew I was an intimate friend of Joe Wang, the maternal uncle, whose sick wife and son I had helped in critical circumstances. At night I was invited to see the maternal uncle and to persuade him to settle the trouble in a more lenient way, and it was thus that I learned all the circumstances of the appalling affair.

After a new palaver, lasting a whole day and night, the case was settled: only 1,000 taels was to be paid in atonement to the maternal uncle and his family, and the maternal uncle himself should take care of the question of the prayers and alms. This settlement was in fact a subterfuge, because prayers are never said and alms never given in case of suicide, so that in reality the whole atonement price accrued to the maternal uncle (Wang family), and the suicide's paternal relatives (Ch'i family).

Under the settlement, the atonement was to be paid on the nail, according to custom, not as an actual lump sum of 1,000 ounces of silver, but partly in cash and partly in livestock and pieces of cotton cloth. Moreover it was customary in all atonements that 600 coins rated 1,000; that one piece of cloth rated as two pieces.

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628 and that prices of animals were fixed at double their true value. (The same custom existed for a widow's bride price.)

Nevertheless, the Li family was ruined. The entertainment of so many hostile guests and of the elders for so many days, the money promised in secret at night in order to effect an advantageous settlement, presents given to the elders, etc., constituted the most important expenses. The atonement was, in fact, the least important expense.

The ill-boding arrival of the deceased girl's maternal uncle, accompanied by the members of the Ch'i family breathing vengeance; the empty home in a state of indescribable destruction; the way in which the formerly friendly Li family was slighted, offended, treated with loathing, saddled with debts and ruined; the leaden atmosphere of gloom for so many days—all these tragic events made a deep impression and enhanced the authoritative stature of the maternal uncle, the hub around which turned the entire tragedy. When one has witnessed such a tragedy and seen one group of people on bended knees in supplication, weeping profusely, before another group of hard-hearted people, unwilling to forgive, their eyes red with hatred, rancor and embitterment, the meaning of "blood vengeance" is understood and remembered forever.

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681 C. Capital and lesser punishments were inflicted by the maternal uncle on his sister's child in certain instances.

The maternal uncle wielded not only the power to permit or to impede the funeral of his sister's children, and to avenge their murder or suicide, but according to custom he had also the right to inflict punishment of various kinds on them. His power to mete out capital punishment may be illustrated by the following two cases of murder, the first involving only one kin group and the second involving two different kin groups.

In May 1914, in the same village of Lichiat'an, a youngster killed the older brother of his father. Subsequent to the division of the patrilineal inheritance the preceding autumn, the father and his brother had become implacable enemies and clashes had occurred between their sons on several occasions.

In this case, the maternal uncle of the murderer was invited together with the village elders and the paternal relatives of the family. The father of the murderer, heavy with despair but hoping that his son would escape with his life, invited men celebrated in the art of patching quarrels, and also the chief and elders of the village. He tried to hide some of his best animals, but no one would help him. The emotion and revulsion which arose in the country at such an unprecedented event had reached fever pitch because in the Monguor patrilineal society (as in that of the Chinese) a father's brother is classified as a "real" father, and therefore in local sentiment the murder was considered tantamount to patricide. The meeting began on the third day and

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lasted for two days, presided over by the maternal uncle of the murderer. Finally, the uncle decided that his sister's son should be buried alive, on the principle of a life for a life; that the murderer's father should defray all the expenses of the coffin, clothes, dinner and ceremonial for his own brother's funeral, should invite lamas to pray, and should give alms to the lamasery.

A document was drawn up in which the maternal uncle testified that he took the responsibility for the punishment, and to this all the chiefs of the families affixed their signatures, testifying that they agreed to abide by the decision of the maternal uncle and that they would not accuse the murderer before a Chinese court. The sons of the murdered uncle had threatened to take the case to a Chinese court, and if that had been done not only would capital punishment have been inflicted, but both families would have been ruined by the Chinese officials. The capital punishment was therefore meted out by the Monguors themselves, the maternal uncle taking the responsibility. Under the then prevailing standards, the Chinese officials, who had both administrative and justiciary powers, would take no notice of such a case of traditional and publicly approved justice unless it were formally brought before them by the relatives of the murdered man.

A deep pit was dug, thorns and brambles were thrown into it, and the murderer, cursed and disowned by his family, naked and bound hand and foot, was pushed into the hole and buried alive.¹⁶ The coffin of the murdered uncle was placed upon the pit and a mound piled over it. The family was ruined.

A similar case happened in 1914 in the valley of Lumench'eng. A wife killed her husband at night with a hammer. In this case, the family of the husband with his maternal uncle was opposed to the family of the wife with her maternal uncle. Since the murder of a husband by his wife also deserves capital punishment in Chinese courts, and since the family of the husband threatened to take the case to the Chinese court, the maternal uncle decreed capital punishment for his niece. She was buried alive.

In addition to capital punishment decreed by the maternal uncle for his sister's children, lesser punishments—often of a severe nature—were also administered.

In 1916, in Tolong,¹⁷ an unmarried youngster was severely beaten by his two brothers at night for theft. He was a black sheep, having brought disrepute on his family. In the morning he was found hanging from a beam. The maternal uncle and the chiefs of the family were invited to a meeting at which it was decided that an atonement should be paid to the maternal uncle.

¹⁶ It is possible that carrying out of the sentence of death by burying alive is influenced by the idea that, by not shedding blood, the chain of revenge and counter-revenge is broken, and the family of the man thus put to death feels no obligation to take up a new "blood-feud."—O. L.

¹⁷ A place-name probably from Monguor *dolon*, "seven."

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681 (Later I heard that this decision had been criticized throughout the countryside.)

In 1917, in the valley of Hungnai a youngster of twenty-one, who was always stealing and thus disgracing his honorable family, had his eyes burned out with quicklime in keeping with the decision of his maternal uncle and the chiefs of the family.

In 1914 in Chenfan¹⁸ valley a young woman, the wife of a poor man, eloped with a rich lover, abandoning her husband and two children. After three or four years, disgusted with the lover, she returned to her mother. Her maternal uncle and her parents ordered her to rejoin her former husband and two children. Her husband, however, before accepting her back, urged the maternal uncle to give him an affidavit, testifying that he would not provoke trouble in case the girl committed suicide, for the poor man suspected that she was not willing to return.¹⁹

It may perhaps seem unbelievable that as late as the period of the Chinese Republic such measures as the inflicting of capital punishment by the people was allowed, without the interference of a court. The explanation is to be found in the old tradition, still persistent at the time, that the courts need take no notice of any crime whatever, if the crime were not brought before a court by someone who had suffered loss or damage through the commission of the crime.

The T'u-szu, the chiefs, and the elders of the villages, who themselves had no right to inflict capital punishment, knew all the facts of such cases as those I have described, since they were invited as arbiters; but they did not interfere as civil officials, because they were Monguors and they felt it natural and reasonable that each family should itself avenge the murder of a member of the family, without interference from outside authority.

In all these cases the maternal uncle acted as a real "master of the bones" of the children of his sister, notwithstanding that, in this patriarchal family system, both the children of his sister and his sister herself were considered to belong entirely to her husband and his family, in all matters of property and authority except offenses that, without the intervention of the maternal uncle, might result in blood feuds between clans. The maternal uncle did not patch up quarrels, but he did take it upon himself to make decisions; he punished, and he alone took the responsibility for his decisions.

The cases cited above highlight the fact that the maternal uncle was simultaneously a protector and disciplinarian of his sister's children, and that his authority

¹⁸ A Chinese place name. *Chen* is "to exercise control by means of a military strong point"; *fan* is general for "barbarian," specific for "Tibetan." Hence the name means "military strong point on the Tibetan frontier." O. L.

¹⁹ I encountered a similar case in a Chinese community. The authority of the maternal uncle is recognized by traditional Chinese law, and Chinese say that when the maternal uncle accuses the children of his sister before a Chinese court, their own parents can do nothing to defend them.

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681 in these particular situations was the same whether the sister's children remained in the families in which they were born, or married out into other families (in the case of the sister's daughter). This relationship between the maternal uncle and his sister's child leads us to inquire into the nature of the relationship between the maternal uncle and his own family, on the one hand, and the families into which his sister's children were born or married, on the other.

Let us consider the relationship between the family of the maternal uncle and the family into which his sister's children were born. The two families—*A* and *B* respectively—were united directly by the marriage of a girl from family *A* with a man from family *B*, and the children of this couple became members of family *B*. We may suppose that the marriage was made possible originally because the two families would be strengthened rather than weakened. Evidence of this friendly relationship between the two Monguor families at the time of the marriage were the many presents which each lavished upon the other.

What was the effect of the maternal uncle's role as avenger and disciplinarian in strengthening or weakening this bond of friendship? Before children were born of the marriage, if the girl was killed or driven to suicide by members of family *B*, or herself caused the death of a member of family *B*, the two families became hostile, but the responsibility of initiating and executing vengeance or punishment fell on the girl's maternal uncle who was not a member of either family *A* or family *B*, but of a third family, *C*. This man assumed the responsibility for the final action taken, and the hostility between families *A* and *B* was thus given some indirection by the interposition of a third party.

When children were born to the girl in family *B*, her brother in family *A* became the maternal uncle of these children, and subsequently the natural death of these children, or their involvement in family murders and suicides, placed families *A* and *B* in a direct relationship of either hostility or closer friendship with each other, as shown by the following table:

<i>A</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	
Paul Ch'i—	Rose Wang	her brother	Joe Wang
<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>
Arthur Li—	Jean Ch'i	her brothers	Bob Ch'i and Bill Ch'i
<i>D</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Joe Chang—	Mary Li	her brothers	Peter Li and Joe Li
<i>D</i>		<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>
Helen Chang		her brothers	Joe Chang and Peter Chang
Joe Wang is the maternal uncle of Jean Ch'i, Bob Ch'i, and Bill Ch'i.			
Bob Ch'i and Bill Ch'i are the maternal uncles of Mary Li, Peter Li, and Joe Li.			
Peter Li and Joe Li are the maternal uncles of Helen, Peter, and Joe Chang.			

This relationship was in fact much more likely to be one of closer friendship in such situations. Conflict of interest between the two families would occur if the sis-

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ter's child had wronged or had been wronged by a member of his own family *B*; in such cases the maternal uncle from family *A* would be called in to administer severe punishment to his sister's child, usually against the wishes of at least one or two members of family *B*, or to initiate vengeance against members of family *B* who had wronged his sister's child. Such cases were quite rare.

More frequently, the maternal uncle was called in to support family *B* by leading the vengeance for wrongs against the sister's child committed by members of other families, as in the case of the sister's daughter who was murdered or driven to suicide by her husband and his relatives. He would also be called on to support his sister's son when the latter was himself carrying out vengeance or disciplinary activities as a "master of the bones." Consequently, family *B* looked on the maternal uncle in family *A* more as a source of moral support than as an object of fear.

While hostility was more apt to arise between the maternal uncle and the family into which his sister's daughter married, here again this eventuality was balanced by the fact that the sister's daughter's husband could call on his wife's maternal uncle to assist him in executing his own vengeance or disciplinary action, in the same way that the sister's son could call on the maternal uncle.

In reality, the role of the maternal uncle in Monguor society tended to contribute to, rather than detract from, the friendly relationship between two families connected by marriage. At the time of the marriage, these did not consider the possibility of feuds between themselves, and weddings were not surrounded by an atmosphere of fear and foreboding of future terroristic activity on the part of the maternal uncle.

The situations described above in connection with murder, suicide, and natural death present only one aspect of the maternal uncle's role. Being crises, they were exceptional, and a consideration of them alone might lead one to visualize the maternal uncle only as the primary agent for meting out justice in the families of his sister's children. His role was more complex and consideration must be given to other aspects, ordinarily overlooked, which were more important in the normal course of life and which reveal other strong bonds between the maternal uncle and the families of his sister's children. In order to get a clearer picture, let us next consider the special relationships between a brother and his sister.

We must first take into account the fact that among the Monguors the oldest son was the chief of the family after the death of his father. His sisters and younger brothers were most intimate with him, and would all take council with him. A particularly close relationship usually developed between a sister and her elder brother in regard to property. Although women could not claim any share of the family inheritance, either in their own family or

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681 in the family of their husbands, it was customary for their mothers to tell their daughters secretly that they might secure a small private herd of animals by enlisting the aid of their elder brothers, who were to approach the father on auspicious occasions and ask for a gift of new born lambs or calves for their sisters. Every year at New Year's time the father was usually in a happy mood, and on the days that lambs or calves were born, the girls would worry their elder brothers and rarely failed to see their wishes fulfilled. Once the animals were obtained they were entrusted to the elder brother's care, marked on the ear with a special mark, and the brother would keep them for the sister in the family herd. On the day of her wedding, a daughter would thus possess a small herd of her own.

[583] Again on the day of her marriage and even after marriage, a daughter would approach her elder brother in an attempt to obtain some more cows. After marriage, a girl never mixed her small herd with the herds of her husband but continued to keep it in the herd of her oldest brother. Whenever she returned home to visit her mother, she examined her little treasure, collected the lamb skins and wool, and used them or sold them for herself and her children.

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604 Furthermore, on the day of her marriage, the daughter of a well-to-do family was usually given some land, called "cosmetic" or "paint" fields—i.e. fields whose revenue was to be used for her own personal use. The revenue from such lands became her own private income and savings. When she died, the revenue could be collected by her children. She was the real owner of the land and possessed the right to transfer it, but before transferring it, she had to inform the family of her intentions and to offer the family the first opportunity to reclaim it. When a woman acquired such lands it was again her oldest brother who took care of the land and planted, weeded, and harvested it for his sister.

I also met six young women who owned thirty or more poplar trees, planted for them by their brothers, on the edge of the fields of their parents, when they were girls of about eight or ten years of age. After fifteen years the trees had become a valuable item of capital.

604 The bond which developed between a brother and sister and which continued after the sister's marriage was extended to the sister's children. Children saw their mother's great affection for her own elder brother and *vice versa*. They knew that their mother had a small private treasure entrusted to him, from which they hoped to benefit eventually. The mother made the children feel toward her brother the way she herself felt. Hence love and esteem grew on both sides and as his sister's children grew up and married, their maternal uncle became their benefactor in the normal exigencies of life, as well as their avenger and disciplinarian in abnormal crises like those noted above.

This relationship between a brother and his sister and sister's children formed the basis for the beneficent and

604 friendly aspect of his relationship both with the family into which his sister married and in which his sister's children were born, and with those families into which his sister's daughters married. The sister's husband's family appreciated the fact that the sister received presents through her elder brother, since her husband and children would indirectly benefit. Moreover, the sister's sons and the husbands of the sister's daughters could call on the sister's brother to act as a go-between when they were bargaining for animals or engaged in court proceedings before the T'u-ssu, to witness contracts for the sale of seeds to the local oil mills, and to help out financially when large debts fell due.

It is apparent therefore that the families into which his sister's children were born or married desired earnestly to cultivate the friendship of the children's maternal uncle, not only because of his position as potential avenging or punishing angel in life and death crises, but also because he could render real aid and support in all ordinary problems both to his sister and to her children. He was in effect not simply a relative, but an intimate friend of the family, and he was given precedence on important occasions relating to his sister's children's status in the society.

When a child was born it was customary to invite its maternal uncle to a feast; when the child was married, both its own maternal uncle and its mother's maternal uncle were invited to the wedding; at New Year's the child was sent to greet its maternal uncle; and finally the maternal uncle was invited to attend the ceremonies for the installation of his sister's son as family chief, or his investiture as T'u-ssu. But the maternal uncle did not arrange marriages nor did he appoint family chiefs. He was simply the most honored guest. For example, I have noted elsewhere ²⁰ that families of ordinary standing were accustomed to present thirteen pieces of clothing to their betrothed daughter, five pieces to her fiancé, one piece to each of her fiancé's paternal grandparents, parents, paternal uncles, maternal aunts, brothers, and sisters. For her maternal uncle was reserved the present of honor—the large official scarf of felicity and a horse. If the girl's fiancé's grandfather were dead, her maternal uncle would be invited to preside at the wedding in his place.

In spite of the maternal uncle's rare intrusion into the affairs of his sister's children in other respects, he was in one kind of problem a meddler. Women are always sensitive about the condition of their daughters and are willing to believe and to magnify all of a daughter's complaints about sufferings inflicted on her by her mother-in-law. If a Monguor woman were an interfering character she could easily attempt to move her brothers to protect their niece, or her sons to protect their sister's child—to intrude, in their interests, into the privacy

²⁰ L. Schram, *Le mariage chez les Tou-juen (Monguors) du Kansou*, 67, Shanghai, *Variétés sinologiques* 58, Imprimerie de la mission Catholique, 1938.

604 of a family which knew the great influence and power of the clan of their daughter-in-law's maternal uncle and had in the back of its mind the fear of a possible suicide by the daughter-in-law. A family might have to brook actual infringement of its rights by the maternal uncles, but undue pretensions of authority on the part of a maternal uncle could be considered as occasional excesses such as occur in the accepted behavior of every society.

Considering these facts from a theoretical standpoint, we may ask whether the influence of the maternal uncle in Monguor society was derived wholly from a previous matriarchal family system or was founded in human nature and hence to be considered as natural in both patriarchal and matriarchal systems. We may also ask whether the giving of some fields and animals to the daughter was necessarily related to the female ownership of land in a matriarchal society. Is the fact that the daughter keeps her wealth in her family of origin also related to that system, or may it be explained simply by the daughter's fear lest her savings be confiscated by her husband's family the first time they are in financial straits?

Let us re-examine the facts in the light of this problem. Historically, the clans of the nomad Mongols of Asia appear to have been, like the Monguor clan, an association of consanguine relatives based on the principle of patrilineal descent and exogamy; the clan protected its own members by the institution of blood feud. Furthermore, the clan would avenge the murder of a person belonging to the same "bone"—i.e. persons born into the clan and related to the clan by patrilineal descent, whether such persons remained with the clan or married out into other clans. The duty to take vengeance was incumbent upon the whole clan and lasted as long as the wrong was not avenged. If one generation had been incapable of taking vengeance, then the obligation rested upon the following generation, and so on. Related clans could be called on for aid and support in carrying out vengeance or protection against it.

In view of this principle of blood vengeance, two facts of the Monguor vengeance pattern emerge as peculiar; first, the placing of primary responsibility for initiating the vengeance on the aggrieved's maternal uncle rather than on his paternal kinsmen, and second, the shifting of vengeance from a clan to a family duty.

In the case of Jean Ch'i, considering the old nomadic society from which the Monguors were derived, we might have expected that vengeance would have been initiated by the Ch'i family—her own kin group, or "bone," led by Paul, her father, by Peter and John, her paternal uncles, and by Bob and Bill, her brothers—not by Joe Wang, her maternal uncle.

This form of vengeance appeared to be somewhat incongruous and I asked for explanations in order to understand the trend of mind of the Monguors. The immediate answer was: "A girl is an *outsider* in her own family; she does not belong permanently to the family.

604 because she will eventually marry into another family; she and her children will bear another surname and she will be buried not in the graveyard of her family of origin, but in the graveyard of her husband's family. If she is killed or commits suicide she has none the less to have her avenger, but since she is an *outsider*, it is appropriate that the brother of her mother assume this duty. Her paternal kinsmen are expected to avenge her death also, but only as second best, following in the wake of the maternal uncles."

When I objected to this explanation on the grounds that in the case of the murder or suicide of Jean's brothers, Bob and Bill, who were not outsiders of the Ch'i family, Joe, their maternal uncle, would have been the leaders of the avengers in precisely the same way, the Monguors answered politely that I was an *outsider* and did not understand the importance of the maternal uncle inside the orbit of the Monguor family.

Other Monguors, in order to support and justify the custom, gave me a most confused and inappropriate explanation: "Brothers and sisters are children of the same bone; members of the same bone have the duty of avenging and protecting each other and upon the most closely related among them the duty was most incumbent and most urgent." This much of the explanation is an aberration which in fact explains the old nomadic and not the Monguor vengeance pattern. From this the explanation went on to say, quite illogically: "Therefore, a mother's brother must protect his sister's children, sisters must respect their brothers, and sister's children are taught to respect and honor their mother's brothers."

This attempt at explanation indicates to me that the Monguors were confused in their thinking on this point, and had not been able to fit this aspect of the role of the maternal uncle consistently into the framework and principles of their patrilineal family system. I am led to suspect that the acknowledgment by them of his right was due to the presence, within their patrilineal society, of principles specific to the matriarchal system.

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562 What other evidence do we have of such an intrusion? I have previously noted many of them in *Le Mariage chez les T'ou-jen*, chapter VI: (1) the abnormal rights of the mother to decide herself about the marriage of her daughter; her consent had to be given even when her daughter was a widow and belonged to the family of her former husband, (2) the right of the mother, in case of the marriage of her son, to go herself to ask for his wife and to fix the date of the marriage before the go-between enters into the action, (3) the fact that in marriages between poor families, the mother-in-law herself went on the last day of the year to bring her future daughter-in-law to her home, (4) the unusual ease in adopting into a family children born of a daughter-in-law who had eloped many years before with a lover, (5) the exceptional marriages with the pole or girdle, so usual with the neighboring Tibetans, (6) the fact that a newborn son was called according to the age of his grand-

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mother, (7) the unusual fact that young boys worked for years or for a whole lifetime in the home of their father-in-law in order to marry his daughter. These leave no doubt that the patriarchal family system of the Monguors had been contaminated by many practices belonging to the matriarchal system.

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What contact did the Monguors have with matriarchal systems? ^{20a} It is significant that the Monguors in Kansu were not only separated from other Mongols, but were living in the neighborhood of Tibetans and Chinese, and moreover had many of these people enrolled in their clans. Certain features of the Tibetan and Chinese social institutions appear to have been incorporated into the Monguor social organization. Among the Tibetans, the matriarchal system was in full bloom and marriages between Monguors and Tibetans opened the doors for admitting matriarchal customs into the daily routine of life to a very large extent.

The readiness of the Monguors to adopt a whole series of matriarchal traits from the Tibetans is even more understandable in view of the fact that the ancestors of the Mongols and Turks lived at the dawn of history in the neighborhood of peoples practicing the matriarchal system and their patriarchal family system was at that time already contaminated.²¹

Professor Eberhard, doubting the former existence of a "pure" and "original" patriarchal system among the Mongols and Turks, writes:

I am forced to make the statement that nowhere did I encounter a culture corresponding perfectly to one of the cultures advocated by the theory of culture circles. . . . I harbor suspicions about the real existence of such cultures; for why do we always encounter mixing and mingling of cultures in all circles? How is it possible to prove the real existence of the culture of a circle, in the manner of the system of culture circles, by other than theoretical evidence? ²²

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My overall conclusions therefore are as follows: first, that the role of the maternal uncle as "master of the bones" of his sister's children—i.e. his authority, in matters of life and death, to avenge or punish them—did not originate in the Monguor patrilineal system, but constitutes a usurpation of powers which belonged in another society to members of the same bone. Second,

^{20a} In this connection, see the outstanding study by Wilhelm Koppers, *Die Frage des Mutterrechts und des Totemismus im alten China*, *Anthropos* 8: 981 sqq., 1930.

²¹ W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* 9, Part 3, *Die Religionen der Hirtenvölker*: 71, Münster, Aschendorf, 1949. W. Eberhard, *Lokalkulturen im alten China*, 176, Leiden, Brill, 1942.

²² W. Eberhard, *Kulturen und Siedlungen der Randvölker Chinas*, 414, Leiden, Brill, 1942. "... so habe ich doch feststellen müssen, dass nirgends in unseren Kulturen sich eine gefunden hat, in der die Kulture 'eines' Kulturkreises vollkommen und rein zutage tritt. . . . Ich habe aber doch Bedenken wenn, die Lage wirklich so ist. Wieso soll es immer nur Mischungen gegeben haben? Wodurch (ausser durch formallogische Schlüsse) ist es dann bewiesen, dass je die Kultur existiert hat, die ein solcher Kulturkreis umfasst?"

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177 that the assumption of this role by the maternal uncle was only one of several non-patriarchal features introduced into the Monguor system as a result of contact with matriarchal systems. Third, that the property, assistance, and respect relationships which existed between a brother and his sister and her children, as described above, were not specific to either the patriarchal or matriarchal systems, but were founded in human nature, in conditions common to both systems. Fourth, I would add that normally the sister and her children are respected and loved in the husband's family and go through life happily—more because the two families are really friendly and intimate than because of the maternal uncle's power to intervene. After all, the solid foundation of families is not fear and hatred but love, and the functions of the maternal uncle must be viewed with not only his emergency powers in mind, but this as well.

THE CHILD

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562 Among the Monguors, as in most societies in Asia, boys are preferred to girls. The description given by Father J. Van Oost of the favoritism shown toward boys among the Mongols of the Ordos might well have been written of the Monguors:

He is surrounded with a kind of idolatry. His parents are proud of him; they cater to all his whims; they rush to dry his tears. A mother is always ready to suckle her son whenever he seems to want it, whether it be night or day. He is a petty tyrant who knows how to make himself obeyed, and his mother carries him around on her back when she is doing her household work. . . . If he gets sick, there is a major crisis. They think he is the victim of evil spirits. They resort to superstitious practices and go to fetch a lama who makes divinations, conjures away the spirits and prescribes remedies and talismans.²³

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562 When a woman is pregnant the whole village knows about it, and all of the women and girls are eagerly interested. Every soothsayer passing through the village is invited to foretell the sex of the expected child, and all the young wives ask him to foretell also when they themselves may expect a similar blessed event. When a pregnant woman enters a doorway and steps over the threshold, the other women always watch to see which foot she puts forward first. They believe that if she regularly steps over a threshold with the right foot, the child will be a boy; if it is the left foot, it will be a girl. This is because they believe that a son lies on the left side of the womb and a daughter on the right; accordingly, if the left side is heavy the mother will instinctively raise her right foot when making a step upward.^{23a}

The festivities for the birth of a first son are especially important, and among the ways of propitiating fate to provide a long life, the selection of a lucky name is particularly important. Matters of such importance in the

²³ Van Oost, *Au pays des Ordos*, as cited, 102.

^{23a} Compare the Mongol expression *kul kundu*, "leg-heavy," for "pregnant."—O. L.

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The guests have been arriving since ten o'clock in the morning, some on foot, others on horseback. The guests' mounts are attached to ropes tied to stakes driven into the ground in the area in front of the door, just as nomads do in front of the tent. All the neighbors, on duty, await the guests in this area, who as they arrive are conducted into a room in the side buildings of the courtyard. In the room, on the wall facing the door, is hung a religious image. The guest bows to it, kneeling. A Chinese has taken up his stand on the k'ang; he holds a brush in his hand and writes in the register of festivities the name of the guest and notes conscientiously the gifts he brings. The master of ceremonies takes these, thanks the guest, claims that he has been too generous, and the guest /43/ leaves the room.

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According to custom, each guest must bring eight loaves of bread cooked in steam; as for the rest, he gives as he pleases. A present of four or six feet of red or green cloth is usually enough. If the guest is an intimate friend of the family, he will give a few feet more, or he will offer a less ordinary kind of cloth, or he will add to his gifts 800 cash strung on a red cord with a strand of white wool at the end. Every family keeps these registers of donors; for later in similar circumstances the register is there to inform them as to the fashion in which the givers will be treated in their turn.

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Custom determines only the presents the mother's family will offer. The maternal uncles of the bride must give her a skirt; the maternal aunts give her a pair of boots or a pair of parti-colored sleeves, or a piece of cloth ten feet long. These formalities taken care of, the guest is conducted into the front building where he greets the heads of the family and is immediately served tea with milk and some bread. Having drunk his cup of tea, he leaves the room to make room for other guests and to mingle with the group which is standing in the courtyard.

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Toward two o'clock in the afternoon no more guests arrive; everyone takes his place in the courtyard in front of the tables set up, the women on one side and the men on the other. If there is a guest of note, he takes his place at the table of honor, which backs up to the front building, with the maternal uncles of the bride.

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604 The master of ceremonies moves toward the girl's maternal uncle, makes three bows in the Chinese manner, and invites him to take his place beside her. The uncle comes forward, stands beside the girl. The assemblage rises and stares silently at the scene

The master of ceremonies presents a cup of wine to the maternal uncle and invites him to empty it. He reiterates the gesture three times. After this he offers to the seated girl two cups, which she grasps in each hand; he puts in them a red lozenge and pours wine in them. She holds the full cups in front of her at the level of her mouth. At this moment the master of ceremonies makes this speech to her:

"Your maternal uncle, the master of your bones, is at your side; the whole family is present here; your departure is set for tomorrow. From the time of our ancestors, at the dividing up of the family property, one whole part used to revert to the son, and to the daughter half of this amount. Present times no longer permit such a division, there comes to you no more than several pieces of clothing"; then, he names one by one the gifts which the family gives her and shows them to those present, without forgetting to state the color, the quality of the fabric.... He likewise enumerates the gifts prepared for the son-in-law and his family. Addressing himself again to the girl, he says, "Your parents have certainly done all that they could for you; and they would have done more, but their means did not permit it. Be glad, be very grateful to your parents, do not forget them, see, your maternal uncle and the whole family will always be 'at your back.'" Then the girl weeps bitterly, and according to custom she must manifest the greatest sorrow.

The whole assemblage is under the spell of the moment, a tear forms in many eyes. Two women come /50/ to get the girl and take her back....

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604 This ceremony gives one something to think about, all the more because it is not explainable in a patriarchal organization where the daughter is the true property of her father, her grandfather, or rather the paternal clan. What is this maternal uncle with all his clan doing, he who will always be the protector of the girl, who will always be "at her back?" This duty is really incumbent on the paternal clan.

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585 Why is the maternal uncle invited to stand near the girl during the
614 whole speech, and why does the maternal clan have precedence at
604 the festivity and at the dinner? Why is the paternal clan in the very
background all this day, when it is nevertheless the one which is
giving its daughter in marriage and which has the duty to defend her?
Also abnormal is this custom which fixes only the gifts to be offered
to the girl by the maternal aunts and uncles and not those to be given
by her paternal uncles and aunts. Finally, why attach more im-
portance to this festivity than to the one at the son-in-law's home?

M Let us remember that this ceremony is held around a shamanistic
585 fire and not before an image of Buddha, although Buddhism is with-
795 out question the primary religion of the country, and that in spite
771 of the fact that the whole clan includes numerous lamas among its
members, shamanism is actually the old religion of the T'ou-jen.

M Let us note again that the master of ceremonies, when he takes
585 the floor, recalls the faraway past in which the daughter still in-
herited from her parents half as much as a son. One would say it
was a history lesson.

We are here in the presence of a very old ceremony, one
which is completely abnormal in a patriarchal organization.

M After the speech and the girl's departure, the guests are in-
[262] vited to sit down; gin is served, and they play more noisily; they
sing and smoke while waiting for the Chinese noodles to be served.

M /51/ The master of ceremonies arranges the gifts in chests,
585 and all the pieces are numbered, so that the next day at the dinner
583 at the son-in-law's home, when he again takes the floor, he can
take them out without difficulty. (1)

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585 1. Timkovski, Voyage, Vol. 2, p. 308:
(Mongols) As soon as the livestock has
been delivered to the future wife's father
(the German translation of the same work
says that he himself comes to the future
husband's home to get them), he gives a
feast which is soon reciprocated by the
husband-to-be for the relatives and

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[354] Four bundles of straw burn at the four corners of the courtyard; it is hoped that the smoke will rise straight up. An oil lamp, in which two wicks of equal length have been placed, is put in front of the religious image in the main building and is lighted as soon as the bride has entered the nuptial chamber. They look at the lamp attentively without touching it in order to see which of the two wicks, the one on the right side or the one on the left, will go out first. In this is seen an omen for the long life of the husband and wife; the right wick designates the girl, the left the boy.

The bride's maid of honor accepted the cup of gin presented to her when she dismounted. She dipped her finger in it and sprinkled some toward the four cardinal directions; then she touched the wine with her lips. She did the same for the bread and tea which were presented. Only after performing this rite did she follow the bride into the nuptial chamber, whose door was closed behind her. She is not given anything to eat or drink as long as the marriage rite is not finished.

[262] As soon as the bride crossed the threshold of the door and entered the courtyard, the go-between took his place in the middle of it, holding in his hands a cup of flour made from parched wheat; he ate some flour and drank some gin each time the bride passed through the courtyard, either going to the kitchen or returning to the nuptial chamber.

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604] The other guests do not enter then but go toward the open area in front of the house. A little table has been placed /66/ in the middle of the area, and on it are seen a well-done sheep, several more legs of mutton, a pig's head, some sausages.... In front of the table is spread out a piece of red felt on which is seated the bridegroom's maternal uncle. Here he seems to fill the post of head of the family as did the maternal uncle of the bride in his niece's family. Gin is being warmed over a small fire.

Upon the arrival of the guests the bridegroom's father has gone to meet them with the traditional k'ata on both hands. He greets each of them by putting the k'ata on their hands. This is the ceremony of welcome.

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A member of the family says aloud, "The sheep will be divided into five parts. The first will be for the maternal uncle, the second for the father, the third and fourth for each of the two singers, and the fifth for the master of ceremonies. Then the guests tackle the legs of mutton, the sausages, etc. After this appetizer the guests of the bride's family are invited to enter the courtyard. The placement of the tables for the feast inside the courtyard is the same as at the bride's home on the day of the dinner.

● [604
260] The bride's maternal uncle and the go-between are invited to be seated in the place of honor. Tea is poured, and loaves of bread cooked in steam are served hot. As soon as the tea is drunk, the two singers from before appear, holding in their hands a teapot whose spout is coated with butter. They pour the buttered tea for all those present, who understand by this rite that they are asked to give up their places to the guests of the bridegroom's family, who will be served tea and bread like them. The bridegroom's family has treated its own guests in the same way as the bride's family treated its guests: introduction into a side room, presentation of gifts, notation in the register....(1)

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1. Shirokogoroff, pp. 82, 83, 84:
Every guest is obliged to give some present which cannot be less than \$1 in value, or in money. They have a special book in which they inscribe all guests' names and presents. The guests whose presents are of value are inscribed in a red paper, which is fixed near the front door. Finally the bride and bridegroom arrive, they descend from the carriage outside the yard. The women who arrived with them conduct the bride and bridegroom by the hands to the screen. /Cited in English. /

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608 brothers, sisters...), then when the son sees that his mother has no relatives, it is a sign for him that his mother's origin is not pure.

When a wife has no niang-kia /literally, "wife's family"/ (the wife calls her own parents, brothers and sisters her niang-kia), then when the relatives of a wife are not known, it is a sign for her that her origin is doubtful. Formerly, a handsome horse used to be given to the bride's maternal uncle, master of his sister's children. But times are changed; although you are the principal guest, nowadays we give only the k'ata; we give you a fine one, a big one, do not refuse it...."

Then the orator addresses the parents of the bridegroom: "During the day your heart, always occupied with the children, cannot be at rest; even at night, you cannot sleep. Such solicitude truly deserves several garments and fine gifts; but you know our indigence; when we stretch out our arms, the sleeves of our garments are too short and the arms stick out from them; at night when we stretch out our legs, our feet stick out from the covers, which are too short. What misery! If we had been able to follow the inclinations of our hearts, you would have had splendid gifts." Then the cupbearer advances toward the grandfather, bows to him, and presents gin to him. "Grandfather," continues the orator, "we present you with a brand-new piece of felt, unfortunately it is too narrow, too short, too thin, and it is badly made in the bargain, but deign to accept it anyway."

The cupbearer advances toward the grandmother. "We give you a garment made of very bad cloth and very badly made, but deign to accept it"; and the ceremony continues thus in the same vein for the father, mother, etc., as was said in No. 11. This scene is often rather picturesque and /70/ brightens up faces; the grandfather must sit down on the piece of felt, the grandmother is dressed in the garment, they have a good time....

585 The orator addresses the bride and groom last: "In olden times,"
431 he says, "sons-in-law used to receive several complete costumes; moreover, they were given in hand a fine bow, a quiver, and arrows; in addition a fine horse. Unfortunately, those good times have vanished, and the parents-in-law offer you only..." (see No. 11).

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apart from clothing and utensils, of a certain quantity of ewes and horses (among the Mongols).

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15. The Wedding

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Then they proceed to the marriage ceremony as such. This most solemn ceremony of all recalls Biblical times to us, first because of its profoundly religious character, and then because of the old man officiating.

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Actually, this office belongs by right to the grandfather in the bridegroom's family. When the grandfathers are dead, the maternal uncle takes their place. The name given to the old man who officiates is very characteristic: he is called *šürödžin khun*, which means literally "the man who gives the blessing." Indeed, it is the old man who orders the prostrations to be made to heaven, to the spirits, to the members of the family and clan, and it is he who pronounces the wishes for good fortune and prosperity, the bringing about of which is awaited from heaven and the spirits. Thus we are in the presence of a religious rite in the full force of the term, a rite which reveals the capital importance attached to marriage. Besides it leaves an unusual impression on the assemblage.

All those present are standing. The bridegroom is on his knees at the left of the bride, whose head is still enveloped in the red cloth; the maid of honor is on her knees behind the bride, likewise a young man behind the bridegroom. Then the grandfather advances and takes his place standing near the sacred fire; he orders in the midst of the greatest silence:

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THAT THE FIRST PROSTRATION BE MADE TO HEAVEN AND TO THE MULTIFARIOUS SPIRITS.

Dě thurō^h thorguē šge thi^hgeri olon phurgān niandu murgu.

The bride and groom, the maid of honor and the young man make the great Chinese prostration: three genuflections and as many bows, touching the ground with the forehead. All is done solemnly and simultaneously.

/75 cont'd/

585 The master of ceremonies of the son-in-law's family then takes
431 the floor to distribute the traditional gifts to the daughter-in-law's family. The son-in-law remains kneeling, holding his horse by the bridle.

585 The master of ceremonies first addresses the maternal uncle of
604 the daughter-in-law. The cupbearer bows to him and offers gin to
431 him three times in a row. He begins with the saying, "Nan tch'ou wai kia, niu tch'ou niang kio," i.e., "the boy has the physique and the moral nature of his mother's family, and the girl those of her own relatives /parents/.

"Now you, maternal uncle, you are the representative of the family stock of our new daughter-in-law; it is fitting therefore to present to you, /76/ before doing so to all the others, our respectful compliments. We offer you the great ritual k'ata and a sheep. We should give you a cow according to tradition, but times have changed. Receive with good will." Formerly, the maternal uncle used to receive a cow on behalf of his mother's family; today he is given a sheep as at the home of the son-in-law. Next he addresses the go-between, for whom they pour the gin.... "Formerly the go-between was given a complete costume, but times are no longer the same.... We present to you a string of cash, be satisfied...."

585 Then it is the turn of the bride's maid of honor; they pour gin
431 for her. They give her a piece of cloth four feet long, a goat, 600 cash. But she hastens to protest with vehemence (it is the tradition), which provokes the laughter of the assemblage. She is given the traditional 800 cash.

The little page comes and receives 200 cash for riding the horse. The bearers of the boxes containing the bride's gifts receive 400 cash apiece; then all the members of the bride's family receive the k'ata. The master of ceremonies sits down, pretending to have finished his task.

585 But then comes what is called the suhuta, the final ceremony.
431 In cauda venenum /"poison in the tail"/. The master of ceremonies
231 from the daughter-in-law's family, as well as several elders of the family, stands up indignant; they manifest with vehemence the desire

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585 to see the old traditions observed and protest against innovations.
431 In this case it is a question of having themselves granted several
231 more head of livestock. The other side understands immediately
that the festivity will not end peacefully without the giving of some
animals. It is the moment for the master of ceremonies from the
son-in-law's family to show eloquence and tact. He rises and pro-
claims that peace between the two families is more important than
several animals. "We want a lasting and peaceful alliance," /77/
cries he. "We must have concord and harmony. We ask no better
than to satisfy your wishes. Choose our best beasts, but leave us at
least several old and thin animals, for we are poor, we still have to
live. But peace above all, and also the welfare of the children.
Do not forget that two animals are necessary for the plow and that if
you take one of them, we shall no longer be able to work our lands;
you will not be able to do any more with one single animal; then
leave face also to your son-in-law. We know the traditions, but
times are no longer the same, and customs also change a little."

During this speech one of the guests of the daughter-in-law's
family has already detached the piece of red cloth from the horse's
mane, which signifies that the horse is considered as secured, ready
to be taken away. The son-in-law leads the horse out of the court-
yard. Two or three members of the daughter-in-law's family who
have gotten together in advance mark about ten animals with butter.
The son-in-law's family is displeased...they get angry...they push
● [604] one another...they shout.... Then the daughter-in-law's maternal
uncle, the representative of the whole clan, rises and asks how many
animals have been marked. "Ten," they answer him, for example.
"Ah, good," says he, "we shall take these ten away." The owners
complain...they beg...they do not let anything leave the court-
yard...all the son-in-law's family kneel before the maternal uncle,
imploring him. In the end they agree on two-thirds or on half of
the animals already marked. The horse is taken away as well as
another animal; the rest of the animals will be taken the next day.

It sometimes happens that the scene does not end so peaceably.
Indeed, it is known that the son-in-law's family has hidden its best

/93 cont'd/

587 The customary proceedings of the marriage of a widow then are
[604] very simple; the maternal uncle who plays the most important role
at the marriage of girls does not even appear. The great preoccupa-
tion of the T'ou-jen in the marriage of a widow is to take her away
from a rival /94/ and to conduct her without let or hindrance to her
new domicile.

6. Two Typical Abductions of Widows

587 The following incidents throw a true light on the T'ou-jen way
583 of thinking concerning the marriage of widows.

At the place Souo-pou-keou lived a widow of a certain Hla Rong. A Tchang of Ki-kia-lin, wishing to marry her, learned that he was too late; the widow had already given her consent to another and had exchanged tokens with him. Tchang wanted her at any price. He proposed therefore to abduct her by force, then to get in touch with the family of the former parents-in-law of the widow to give them the earnest. If such affairs are taken to court, reimbursement of the earnest is required from the abductors, then the woman is
[67] granted to them. These abductions are thus recognized by the law. Tchang calls upon the help of about 30 trustworthy men, well armed, to take away the widow from the hands of his rival's band the night when the rival would take her to his home. The abductors were at their post, but the other band did not arrive. Believing therefore that they had been fooled, they decided to go to the widow's house, take it by assault, and abduct the widow.

Tchang counted as head of his band the widow's nephew, who could inform them about the arrangement of the house. They burst into the courtyard, they force the doors, they gag the woman, four of them carry her outside, they put her on the horse, and they flee
[442] hurriedly. Meanwhile the nephew had been taking care of the dogs and had opened the great door.

The journey went on in the greatest silence. After 15 kilometers of forced march they arrived home, removed the gag from the woman, and untied her hands. What was their surprise when in

/151 cont'd/

764 form: After incinerating their dead according to Lamaist rites, they gather the remains in a chest ad hoc, and bury them provisionally in a clean, dry place on the slope of a mountain. At the ts'in-ming /ch'ing ming/, the festival of the dead among the Chinese, they disinter the chest to bury it for good in the common cemetery of the clan. This custom is followed even by the T'ou-jen who live beside the cemetery. This practice which the T'ou-jen claim to have been general in the old times nowadays is already no longer seen nowadays in many places.

2. Relations of the Maternal Uncle with the Family of his Sister and her Children

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Another basic element of the matriarchate is the particular situation which the maternal uncle occupies in this organization where all the rights of the family seem to belong to him.

a) Right of life and death over his sister's children.

[761]

Now, even today, among the T'ou-jen the maternal uncle has kept the most important rights over his sister's children; he has even kept the right of life and death over them. Elsewhere I shall describe three true-to-life happenings where one sees the maternal uncle preside over a family council in which, without any subsequent form of trial and without the intervention of the law or the courts, he decides that /152/ his sister's son will be buried alive. Now without the consent of the maternal uncle nobody would dare to make such a decree; no member of the family would dare take upon himself such a responsibility, not even the grandfather, although we are in the patriarchal period. These facts are all the more strange since capital punishment is not even within the jurisdiction of the head t'ou-se.

In its place I shall quote with all the circumstances the case of two brothers who in the lifetime of their widowed mother indirectly caused the suicide of their brother, a rogue of the worst kind, whom they had shut up in a room after beating him; the scamp hung himself. Now, for causing their brother's death, they had to pay an indemnity to their maternal uncle, the master of the bones of his

/152 cont'd/

604 sister's children. Note that even if the father had been living, the procedure would have been the same.

[762] The maternal uncle plays the principal role in the parleys on the occasion of the suicide of his sister's children. Third series of facts: A young woman, an unbearable scold, had abandoned her poor husband to follow a lover in easier circumstances. After two or three years, since she no longer got along with him either, the woman came back to her family, who wanted to return her to her legitimate husband. Fearing that at the least quarrel she might swallow opium and ruin his family, he required the maternal uncle of the shrew to constitute himself guarantor that there would not be any action on the part of his family in case the woman committed suicide. There was a family council, and the maternal uncle signed a contract in the sense indicated after making strongly virulent admonitions to his niece. The maternal uncle had to make the pledge, and not her own father. I met an absolutely similar case among the Chinese of Kansu.

These three series of facts prove the maternal uncle's rights of life and death over his sister's children. They are all of relatively recent date. In none of these cases was the maternal uncle charged at law. This is therefore proof that present-day custom still accepts these rights.

604 /153/ In China also, moreover, the rights of the maternal
171 uncle are very extensive even today; the Chinese proverb says enough about it, "kieou-fou kao wai-cheng, iang tao tse k'eng pou hia," i.e., "when the maternal uncle makes a charge at law against one of his sister's children, the children's own father can do nothing to defend them." (1) The maternal uncle has the right to punish his

1. Shirokogoroff, op. cit., p. 144:
If the mother should accuse her son,
intervention to stop the execution in
this case can be made by the mother's
brother, who can take the guilty man
under his charge.... In the intervention

/153 cont'd/

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of the mother's brother, we can see some survival of an ancient form of the Manchu society which was organised on the principle of materline filiation, in which the mother's clan was a natural protector of its members. It is clear that the part of protector was executed by the mother's brother. Even now the mother's brother... is generally charged with the moral control over his sister's children (as among the Chinese). Therefore he sometimes is obliged to help his sister's children. He is in very peculiar terms with them... is much beloved by them... he helps them in matrimonial affairs, he may also intervene in the education of them... P. 154: The clan organisation in its institutions, as for example, the woman chieftainship, the peculiar rights and duties of the mother's brother, the mother's privilege to prevent her daughter although she is already married, and several others, retains traces of a great influence of the women and their relatives, which show that the Manchus in former times had another system of social organisation. /Cited in English./

P. 91: During the life of a married couple, the wife's mother's clan has no important part, except in the case of divorce, but relations and high consideration of this clan are always strictly maintained. /Cited in English. /

nephews in China.

/153 cont'd/

604 These facts make understandable the expression so often met in this study, "that the maternal uncle is really the master of the bones of his sister's children."

604 b) Permission to bury the dead is given by the maternal uncle.
764 After what we have just said, is it not natural that the T'ou-jen call the maternal uncle at the death of his sister and her children? Burial will never take place as long as he has not given his permission. In the case of rumors about the unnatural death of a person under his jurisdiction, he will examine the body. It is to recognize his rights that the family will call him each time that a burial takes place to inspect the body, and they will humbly beg him to give permission /154/ for burial or cremation. When they bury in the Chinese manner, they present to the maternal uncle the axe and the wedge for closing the cover of the coffin. This is what the Chinese do also.

604 c) Precedence of the maternal uncle at the wedding.
585 In the light of these facts, is it not easy to understand the importance that the T'ou-jen attach, at the time of marriage, to the mother's clan and to the maternal uncle in particular? He presides then at the festivity at his sister's home. They offer him the great gift of honor. He is invited to remain standing beside the bride during the speech of the master of ceremonies, who names him at this moment the master of the bones of his sister's children. At the home of the son-in-law it is he again who is the great guest and who receives the gift of honor. If there are neither grandfather or old men, it is he who conducts the wedding ceremony, who orders the prostrations, and says the blessings. At the time of the carrying off of the animals and of the uproar at the end of the wedding festivity, it is he again who settles the quarrel in the name of his sister's family, and it is before him that the son-in-law's whole family prostrate themselves. At the dinner at the bridegroom's home, the master of ceremonies emphasizes the importance of the maternal clan: "The man as well as the woman must have a maternal clan so that they can prove their origin." They scarcely speak of the paternal clan. Addressing himself to him a second time, the master of ceremonies says: "The man is indebted to the maternal clan for his qualities, as the woman is to her family's clan." Not the least allusion to the paternal clan.

Ma /158 cont'd/

606 he is made to sit at the bottom of the k'ang on a little bench during the dinner which precedes the departure, while the drivers of the cart take their places at the table. The bridegroom is not treated as a guest there either.

Mo In the same series of facts must again be classed the presence
601 required of the son-in-law at the home of the parents-in-law when
606 the latter have to defend their rights by force, for example, on the occasion of a suicide or the repudiation of one of their daughters.

The fact that the son-in-law calls all the members of his wife's family by the same name that he calls respectively those of his own family, adding gadin, which means "relative by marriage," is rather significant in itself.

Mo All these facts taken together prove not only the existence of
60 the matriarchate among the T'ou-jen at a /158/ previous period, but they even give the illusion, both by their number and by their diversity, that the T'ou-jen still live under this system today. Now that is not true. Their social economy is indubitably patriarchal. The explanation of this fact must be found in this: that they practice these matriarchal rites and customs without understanding them any more, because their ancestors practiced them, because they still continue to be part of the body of custom. They do not find it strange that the

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[604] maternal uncle is called the "master of the bones of his sister's children," that he gives permission to bury the dead, that he presides at weddings, etc. It seems completely natural to them that it is he who enjoys these prerogatives and not the grandfather, solely because he has always enjoyed them. T'ou-jen men of letters, imbued with

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[171] Confucianist principles, do not examine this question either, for, they say, our T'ou-jen ways have always differed from Chinese ways...., and for them all is accounted for.

Thus it is that one understands the coexistence of two systems diametrically opposed to each other and the extreme slowness with which one passes from one social system to another among these peoples. This is also what explains the great diversity one encounters in the ways and customs of the T'ou-jen when one considers them in detail.

[630 cont.]

Details

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The consecrated person: The person may be a woman or a man. He must be advanced in age; usually he is around sixty years old. At this age they are pious and reflective and are better able to observe the prescriptions. Young people are eager for life, violent, and uncontrolled. The consecration is done only by an incarnation, hutukhtu, not by an ordinary lama.

• [604]

[621]

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Preparations: The preparations are carried out in consultation with the mother's brother. He determines the day and the hutukhtu who is to be invited. Since the whole village takes part in the celebration, money is saved a long time in advance. Sheep, pigs, or a cow are slaughtered; oil-baking, bread, and oil-sticks, san-tzu, are baked for provisions; the house and yard are put in order, liquor is distilled, new clothes are purchased, and the gifts for the hutukhtu are provided. The latter, a few days in advance, sends one or several monks who put the room in order for him and prepare the kitchen, so that he may live and eat worthily.

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Gratulation and reception of guests: On the day set, the person to be consecrated puts on his best clothes and stays in a clean side room. The visitors, relatives, and [631] guests come early in the forenoon. They gratulate the person to be consecrated and bring a gift; usually they wrap a hada around it, which they solemnly hand to the person. The gifts are put on a chest in a room, usually in front of a household altar. Bread, oil-baking, cloth, hadas, silver money, etc. are given. A master of ceremonies is designated so that all may go according to custom and order.

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Of the guests, the mother's brother is the person of greatest respect. One goes toward him and hands him a hada. When he comes, the person to be consecrated steps down from the kang and receives him. He then hands the gifts to him and is treated with tea and cake in the place of honor. Then everyone together drinks tea and liquor and breaks pieces of oil-sticks into the bowls. -- Aside from the mother's brother, the daughter's

[631 cont.]

527 husband and the daughter's children must give a hada and
778 money to the person to be consecrated. In return they later
888 receive greater remuneration when they depart.

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Feast: The feast takes place in the yard, first for the men, then for the women. Three fields are divided off; right and left for guests, and in the center for the mother's brother with the two closest relatives. These three sit on a felt mat on even ground with their backs to the main door of the main house and have before them a low kang table with the dishes; they are served separately by the master of ceremonies. On the two fields to the right and left, straw is scattered in a square; heavy planks are put in front of it and sometimes also mats, which are to represent the tables. In the middle of each square there burns a fire in which tea and liquor are warmed.

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The food is introduced with tsamba and tea, which is taken with butter and milk. Mutton or pork follows; the fatter it is, the better liked and more superior it is. A considerable amount is drunk. Rice follows as the main dish, which is mixed with butter and sugar and sweet roots. -- The women eat after the men. -- During the meal there are always some free, who sing and dance.

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Settling the prayer fee: After the meal, the master of ceremonies pours out liquor for the mother's brother. The sons, daughters, and daughters-in-law kneel down before the mother's brother. The master of ceremonies hands him a hada and starts the negotiations over the price. The mother's brother demands expensive gifts and much money for the lama; the master of ceremonies, through his rhetorical skill, must gradually lower the demands, until finally a suitable sum is agreed upon. Then the sons and daughters stand up, kowtow, thank the mother's brother, and go. This is similar to what is done at the pai-ta before the cremation (1).

1. [Foreign text p. 634.] For further details, see chapter, "Customs concerning the Dead and Cremation." Here, too, the

[631 cont.]

[Note on foreign text p. 634 cont.]
prominent position of the mother's
brother is particularly striking.

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Arrival of the lama: The day before or early in the morning, horsemen have ridden to the lamasery to fetch the hutukhtu. He comes towards midday and is led into the house with the usual ceremonies. On the threshing floor before the yard gate the women dance and sing with all their might. In the yard the incense offering is burned and the conch [632] is blown. The lama is led to the kang in the main house; there he rests and drinks tea.

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After a considerable time, the mother's brother and the master of ceremonies introduce themselves to him, give him a hada, and request him to bless the guests at the celebration. Outside, before the door of the main house, he sits down on a chair, and all pass by with bent heads, the mother's brother first. The hutukhtu touches the crown or the forehead of each one with his heavy prayer book. This is called the lama-blessing, from which the entire ceremony gets its name (2). --

[788]

2. [Foreign text p. 634.] Cf. chapter, "Reception of the Lama." I could ascertain no name other than lama ndziala; ndziala has a whole series of meanings, among others: to invite a hutukhtu. Because the age-consecration is the greatest familial religious event to which the hutukhtu is invited, it is simply called the "invitation." It is a ceremony in which a special relationship to monasticism is established through the consecration.

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The person to be consecrated does not come, but waits until later.

[635 cont.]

764 evening the neighbors and friends gather and pray for the dead, squatting in a circle. Some days before the cremation, the master of ceremonies invites a lama to conduct the death ceremonies and burn the corpse. First, however, the mother's brother must release the corpse; this is done the evening before at the meal, when he demands an accounting for the dead person and his interment.

[792] The lama performs almost the same ceremonies on this occasion as at the fire-pouring. After the cremation the remaining bones are kept in a wooden chest and temporarily buried on the spot. [765] Not until the next spring do the relatives transfer them to the family cemetery. -- Small children are not buried. Adult girls 766 are burned quietly without ceremonies in an isolated place.

765 The strict period of mourning lasts 49 days. As a sign of mourning, the men turn their clothing inside out, and the women remove their ornaments and certain parts of their headdress.

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Details

763 Preparation of the corpse: Shortly before death, the men 764 shave first the head and then the beard of the dying person. If death sets in too suddenly, however, so that they can no longer shave him alive, it is left undone. After the shaving, he is undressed and his hands, face, and feet are washed, not the entire body. The men do this for men, the women for women. The women keep their long hair, as do girls. The hair is parted in the center and two three-stranded braids are plaited, which hang down over the breast or the back. In the case of sudden death, the corpse is merely washed and the hair dressed; the washing is then done with only a damp cloth (1).

[823]

1. [Foreign text p. 650.] Why no water may flow over the corpse could not be discovered; probably it is feared that the water would thereby be made impure; it is counted among the basic elements.

[639 cont.]

764 The official prayer-service is undertaken by a lama, if
782 possible by a hutukhtu. He is given a room of his own in the
792 house of mourning, which ordinarily immediately adjoins the
room in which the corpse is laid out, so that he can remain on
the kang when he recites the office of the dead. A lama never
prays directly before the corpse. A hutukhtu visits the house of
mourning only on the day before the cremation, and stays there
only one night. He also always undertakes the ceremonial cre-
mation with the fire-pouring. Other lamas, on the other hand,
may perform services in the house of mourning several days before.

[177] In recent times the Tujen also invite Chinese bonzes for
the prayers. They adhere to their own rites. It also happens that
bonzes and lamas are invited at the same time. Then the
prayer rite is mixed. A cremation, however, is never carried
out without some religious officiant first giving the prayers for
the dead (12). Lamas of lower rank, who may not undertake the

[123] 12. [Foreign text p. 654.] The
Tujen have no difficulties in in-
viting representatives of various
religions for prayers. I was even
requested once to give the Christian
office of the dead. -- On the other
hand, the Chinese Buddhists also
invite the lamas to give prayers for
the dead.

fire-pouring, or bonzes do not go along to the place of cremation,
but remain in the house of mourning.

764 For the prayer, the relatives, lamas, and bonzes re-
782 ceive a corresponding honorarium which is usually fixed by
792 the mother's brother on the occasion of the demand for an ac-
465 counting during the last mourning meal. The Chinese bonzes,
[604] to be sure, demand a fixed fee immediately upon being in-
vited; otherwise they do not come at all. The other persons
who say prayers, assistants at the cremation, etc. receive com-
pensation in the form of alms on the eve of the cremation or on
the morning after the cremation.

[640 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text p. 654 cont.]
hsiao-tzu in Chinese, who are the
male descendants and relatives of the
first and second degree, for example,
younger brothers, younger cousins,
grandsons.

on the mother's side do not appear in the house of mourning un-
til the eve of the cremation.

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They must be informed, however; immediately after the
death; this is called "death announcement." The master of
ceremonies, with a small bottle of liquor, goes to the mother's
brother to announce the death of the latter's nephew or niece (14).

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14. [Foreign text p. 654.] In
recent times the Tujen announce
the death to the mother's brother
by means of a written communica-
tion, like the Chinese. The origi-
nal practice, however, is the an-
nouncement with the liquor-jug, to
which is tied a flock of wool.

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The two now consult as to how the funeral solemnities are to
be arranged, how many monks are to be invited to pray, how
large the fees are to be, etc. The mother's brother is intent
upon setting demands as high as possible, whereas the master
of ceremonies sets lower ones. Once they have agreed upon

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the approximate level, they drink the little jug of liquor to-
gether. If they do not agree, the master of ceremonies returns
home with the liquor and he receives new instructions from the
bereaved family. Sometimes this happens two or three times.
A final arrangement is not made until the last day at the ac-
counting in the house of mourning.

On the eve of the cremation, the mother's brother, and
with him all the male relatives on the mother's side, appears
in the yard of the bereaved. The women among the maternal

764 [640 cont.]

[602] relatives do not come (15). The mother's brother is solemnly

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15. [Foreign text pp. 654-655.] Three groups of relatives are to be distinguished, which correspond to the kinship divisions of the Chinese there: 1. One's own family, dzienani kudē, Chin. pen-chia. To this belong the descendants in a direct line, son, grandson, grandchildren, even the daughters who are already married outside. They live together in one compound. 2. Cousinhood, dzienani sāni, Chin. tang-chia-tzu. These are the father's brothers and cousins, in practice all the relatives with the same family name. -- This group is obligated to provide for the interment, while one's own family (even the daughters) wear mourning dress and are subject to the strict mourning taboos. As soon as the daughters return to their husband's family, however, they take off the mourning. 3. Affinity by marriage, urog, Chin. ch'in-chia, ch'in-ch'i. Since among the Tujien here the Chinese expressions are now in use, the following names should be distinguished: ch'in-chia in the strict sense is the relationship of the sons-in-law with whom the daughters have married. They have another family name, wai-hsing. The family from which the mother comes is called wai-chia; here the brother of the mother is the person of respect who represents her interests. The family from which the mother of the father comes is called wei-chia; here, too, for the

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[Note on foreign text pp. 654-655 cont.]
father his mother's brother is the person
of respect, who in case of death demands
an accounting. Wei-chia and wai-chia
have the same signs; only the pronuncia-
tion is different. Literally translated it
means [655] "the outside family," in
other words, not belonging to the male
line. Instead of wai-chia one also says
niang-chia, which designates the family
from which the mother comes. This
expression is also used for the family
of the lama, who, of course, is unmarried.
-- The wai-chia or niang-chia does not
appear until the day before the cremation.

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The mother's brother is solemnly

764 received by the master of ceremonies and led to the death-box.
602 There he and his retinue offer the 12 loaves, burn paper, and
604 kowtow. During this time all the relatives must express great
[782] bereavement and the women utter loud lamentations. The
mother's brother also weeps. After this ceremony, the mother's
brother is led into the house and onto the kang, where he is
given tea and bread. He rests a little while. The other com-
panions are given hospitality outside in the yard where every-
thing is set up for the funeral meal and the ceremony of the ac-
counting.

[641] The mother's brother is led into the yard and sits
on a white felt mat which is spread out on the ground directly
before the entrance of the main house. He sits with his back to
the house, facing the mani-tree. A kang table is put in front
of him. The other relatives on the maternal side sit on straw to
the right and left of him in a semicircle. Boards which are sup-
posed to represent tables are put in front of them. Now oil-baking,
tea, and pastries are brought. The serving is done by the cousin-
hood on the father's side (16). After the first bite, the guests are

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16. [Foreign text p. 655.] At the
interment, the Tujen have the

[641 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text p. 655 cont.]
following offices: 1. The master of ceremonies. He takes care of everything connected with the customs concerning the dead and the cremation. He is called by the Chinese name sang-kuan, that is, leader of the interment, or hu-sang, that is, protector of the interment. He is usually picked from the cousinhood. 2. The gift-guardian. He takes the offering loaves and keeps them in a special room. In Chinese he is called k'u-kuan, that is, treasure-guardian. -- The Chinese also put a secretary at his disposal, who notes what the individual guests have given. The Tujen do not have this. 3. The host. He is there solely for the lama and provides for his entertainment, for his animals, for the things needed at the ceremony, for paper to burn, etc. The Tujen call him kānguō. In his place the Chinese have an incense-manager. 4. The female cook, called dziemā nienie by the Tujen. -- With exception of the kānguō and the dziemā nienie, the officiants seem to have been taken over from the Chinese.

764 given some liquor, and the bereaved on the father's side come in the circle with the master of ceremonies and kneel on the ground before the mother's brother. The master of ceremonies steps forward and invites the mother's brother to take a drink of liquor. He hands him a hada and a piece of white cloth and requests him to present his wishes for the dead and to release the corpse for the cremation.

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[641 cont.]

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[273] The mother's brother puts the hada over his shoulders, takes a swallow of liquor, and begins his speech. Usually he demands an accounting concerning the care of his protégé during the latter's illness and demands the small fees for the prayer service, saying that they should be ashamed of such avarice, the dead had always been a good person, the pride of his family, he deserved better; now at least one should give him a decent death-box and provide the most magnificent cremation possible; far too few lamas had been invited, but now they should recompense them with much money and rice and butter, etc.

[273] Every time that the mother's brother puts forward a wish or a complaint and pauses, the master of ceremonies has his liquor bowl refilled and calls upon him to drink. Then the master of ceremonies replies in the name of the paternal relatives, seeks to invalidate the reproaches, to lessen the demands, and to emphasize the efforts of the family. He says that the most expensive medicines were procured for the deceased during his illness, for how could one neglect such a virtuous person; moreover, everything that the family could do in his honor and for his soul would be done, but one should not demand the impossible; after all, one must die sometime; the times are bad, but they would gladly give the lama that and that, etc. -- So it goes back and forth between the mother's brother and the master of ceremonies, until a course is finally agreed upon and the mother's brother declares that now he is satisfied and will release the corpse. Now the mother's brother is invited to inspect the corpse, but he usually does not do this.

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604 After this speech, the bereaved arise, kowtow three times before the mother's brother, and return to the deathwatch by the box. The mother's brother follows them and kowtows before the dead. Then alms are distributed to the guests, usually [43] coins. This is called "to do good," for it is advantageous for the deceased. Then the meal for the relatives on the mother's side [735] takes place in a large circle. Usually there is rice, but among poor people only noodle soup.

[775]
[177] [642] The ceremony of the demand for an accounting has the purpose of releasing the soul of the dead for the migration

[642 cont.]

764 of the soul, according to the saying: if the mother's brother does
604 not open his mouth, the dead cannot migrate. When the soul has
775 no more demands to make on this world, then it leaves house and
177 home. Its demands are advocated by the mother's brother (17). --

[192]

17. [Foreign text pp. 655-656.] The people do not agree about the origin and meaning of this ceremony. The Chinese say that it was copied from them; the Tujen claim that it is an old custom of their ancestors. -- The Chinese also have the name bāda (pai-ta); they also say pai-wai for it. They have no special explanation for pai-ta; they interpret pai-wai as "to profit, to tain an advantage." There is no character for either word. This would not be so important, however, since there is a great number of dialectal expressions for which there are no characters. -- The informant believes that bāda is a Tujen word and means "to profit, to gain," exactly like the Chinese pai-wai. If this custom does not occur farther to the east, which would have to be investigated, then one could conceive of it as a borrowing from the Tujen.

The pai-ta of the Chinese is somewhat more extensive. First there is the donning of the white mourning cap, tai-hsiao, then the viewing of the corpse, wang-ku, that is, to view the bones; the mother's brother in this role is called ku-chu, that is, bones-master, an expression that the Tujen also have. Then follows the speech of the mother's brother, pai-wai. And when the negotiations on this

[642 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text pp. 655-656 cont.]
occasion are concluded satisfactorily,
then there follows first the kowtow with the
offering for the dead before the corpse. Con-
cerning the bone relationship, cf. Part 2, I,
2.

The speech of the mother's brother is
somewhat different from that of the Tujen.
He principally demands a magnificent
coffin, elegant death-garments, and many
bonzes for the interment. Indeed, he even
reclaims things of the dead person, for in-
stance, the cow that provided him with
milk, as well as valuables that are desired
as mementos, for, he says, since the be-
loved deceased no longer dwells among
his relatives, one wants at least his per-
sonal objects out of affection. Everyone
knows that this is done less out of affec-
tion than out of a desire for gain. [656]
The quite un-Chinese demand for the
milk cow is striking here, since the Chi-
nese drink practically no milk.

Among the Tujen, the pai-ta makes
a somewhat more selfless impression. The
negotiations deal primarily with the lamas
to be invited and their prayer fee, and
this primarily so that the soul of the
dead person will be satisfied and set out
on its migration.

In the case of the pai-ta, therefore,
a twofold viewpoint is to be differentiated,
the social, which comes to the fore more
among the Chinese, and the religious,
which is of more concern among the Tujen.
In the first case it is a matter of asserting
the rights of the mother's family; in the
second case, it is a matter of the conception

[642 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text pp. 655-656 cont.]
of the souls of the dead, who evidently are regarded as living corpses. This point is decisive in explaining the meaning. It is a matter of the peace and good fortune of the family, which are endangered by a restless soul if it is not satisfied and continues to wander about. This satisfaction is brought about by providing a decent interment (clothing, coffin) and the prayer of the lama. Then "the way is open" for the soul, as the Buddhists say; the significance of the above-mentioned proverb of the Chinese is shown here. How strongly this conception still affects even the Chinese is shown by the recast saying, wai-chia pu k'ai yen, wang-jen pu shang t'ien, that is, if the mother's family does not begin to speak, the dead will not ascend to heaven. -- With all this, however, it becomes clear how strong the rights of the mother's family are, and its concern for its members even beyond death.

If there is no actual mother's brother, then the one nearest to the mother's brother takes his place; this is the one who follows the mother's brother in the inheritance.

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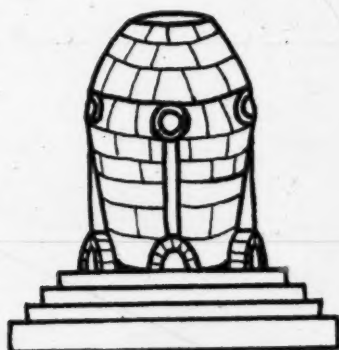
[763]

Time of cremation: As soon as the dead person draws his last breath, a relative goes to the soothsayer or Bon priest and has the day of cremation determined by the spirits. He does not enter the compound of the soothsayer, however, but announces himself in front of the large gate of the yard, because since he comes from the house of a dead person, he may not appear before the gods. Aside from the spirit-spear, spirit-table, spirit-litter, and the Bon priest, one may also ask a Chinese lay bonze. Lamas and Taoist bonzes never determine the time. Only the day is given, not the hour. As

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[643 cont.]

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Crematory, tab.
(Drawing of a Tujen.)

[531]

[Note on foreign text pp. 657-658 cont.]
the drawing on it; then the base is built
on it. Several sheets are often pasted to-
gether. The drawing is sometimes so
wide that it sticks out under the base. The
ground-drawing naturally also varies in the
decoration, but the thunderbolts and the
lotus flower are always there. The oven
with the corpse is thought of as borne by
the lotus flower, out of which come the
flames of the transformation of life dur-
ing the burning. In this connection cf.
the section, "The Fire-pouring," Note 4.
-- There are certainly connections between
the crematory and the burn-pa of the
chorten.

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The funeral procession: On the morning of the day set, the
mother's brother and all the relatives of the deceased burn white
paper in front of the box; they kowtow three times and start a
loud lamentation. Four bearers take the box with the corpse up on

[648 cont.]

766 and on the same day on which the girl died. If she died in the morning, she is burned in the evening; if she died in the late evening, she is burned the following morning. A man from her own family takes the corpse just as it is, with the clothes, over his shoulder, carries it to a remote ravine, digs a hole by a copse, piles straw and twigs in it, puts the corpse on top, and burns it. Usually a few other people also help. One does not wait until the dead girl is completely reduced to ashes, but leaves the still smoldering corpse behind and goes home. Dogs and wolves consume the remains. As soon as a girl has been married, however, even if only for a few days, she receives an honorable cremation like any other woman, with all the ceremonies, with prayer, and with a death-box. This also applies to those daughters who [588] have not yet found a man, but who are married to the sky or the mani-tree.

762 If an adult, whether a man or a married woman, has
766 killed himself, he receives the usual cremation ceremonies without fire-pouring and without a death-box. Usually no one is invited to give the prayer. At the final funeral meal, however, [782] the mother's brother will demand a precise accounting [604] concerning the causes of the suicide, especially if a woman is involved, and he will insist upon an honorable death rite with a death-box. Disputes are common at such times.

766 Those who lost their lives through violence, such as drownings, falls from heights, murder, etc., receive a cremation or interment like any other person of the same age.

[649] Those who died outside the yard, be it an ordinary death or through an accident or suicide, are always laid out outside of the compound; say, in a special tent or in a cave. If a suicide has taken place inside the yard, however, the person who has taken his life is laid out in the house.

792 Persons who have died far away are brought home. If
766 this is not possible, for instance, in the case of soldiers, a lama is invited. While praying he writes down the name of the deceased on a stiff sheet of paper and sticks it in a measure of grain (wheat), which is then placed on a table in the room into which otherwise the death-box would have been brought. All [212] the same ceremonies are now carried out in front of it, as though

[205 cont.]

774 Unequivocal statements concerning the conceptions of the soul among the Tuijen could not be secured. It is true that several souls can be inferred from the death customs described, but the naming and peculiar nature of these souls remain vague.

192 Two designations for "soul" come into consideration:
774 namsū (namšē) and suniedzē. The word namsū is seldom used. According to the DMF (256), it corresponds to the Tibetan ñams-su. This independent connection cannot be confirmed in Ch. Das, but ñams alone is found there, p. 476, with the meaning: "...the soul, mind, spirit as an entity" [cited in English]. The su could at most still be an instrumental particle. One will probably not go wrong, therefore, if he equates namsū not with ñams-su, but with the Tibetan rnam šes, pronounced nam-še.

Ch. Das (762) translates it with: "...the mind, knowledge, intellect, memory" [cited in English]. H.A. Jäschke, on the other hand, has for it the explanation (315): "3. in popular language: soul, e. g. of the departed..." [cited in English]. The much more frequently used word suniedzē has the same meaning. It is the equivalent of the Mongolic sūnesūn. Both namsū and

774 suniedzē signify nothing uniform, for there are three souls: nigē
775 kundu ġuran namsū-i, or nigē kundu suniedzē ġuran-i, that is:

"There are three souls to a human being"; cf. DMF 256. And of what kind are these souls? torōñ yesē saġdzini, ġuordani sdziewa awura sdzini, ġurandani iliedu furani (cf. DMF 361), that is, "The first guards the bones, the second assumes the re-birth, the third transforms itself into a demon." Mostaert, *op. cit.*, refers to Sanžeev, "Weltanschauung und Schamanismus der Alaren-Burjaten [World-view and shamanism of the Alar-Burjat], " *Anthropos*, 22, 1927, p. 585. The conception of the tripartition, however, is much more widespread; at any rate in Lamaistically influenced Asia it is found almost everywhere. Even the Tsinghai Chinese know of three souls: one goes into the underworld, one stays with the corpse (bones), one wanders around in the world. What is common to these three souls is that they can separate themselves from the body.

775 The bone-soul remains with the skeleton after death, at
776 least until the rite of the bāda has been completed, whereby it
604 is satisfied and becomes free. Its agent in this ritual and the

[205 cont.]

775 decisive authority is the mother's brother of the deceased. There-
 764 fore among the people he is accordingly called tsigan yesē daxu,
 604 that is, "white-bone-master"; Chinese [206] ku-chu, that is,
 "bone-master." This soul finally becomes free at the cremation,
 at which, of course, the bones (better: the skeleton) are destroyed
 except for a few remains. The peculiarity of this soul¹ is its
 775 clan [Clan] membership, as is expressed by the name of the
 614 mother's brother and his importance. He is the representative
 604 of the mother's kin-group [Sippe]. The Tujen, however, like
 764 the Mongols and other tribes, determine the kin group accord-
 ing to the bones. Among the Tujen likewise the question as to
 the family is: "What are your bones," tsini yesē yan-i? Bones
 and clan (kin group) therefore are equated. Thus one has
 grounds for maintaining that the bone-soul is borne by the life
 principle of the clan and propagates itself in the clan. How
 is unclear. As clan-master, the mother's brother is also bone-
 master. He exercises more rights over his sister's child than the
 latter's actual father and also demands the final accounting.
 But what happens to the thus liberated soul? Perhaps a similar
 custom among the Manchuria-Tungus, specifically among the
 Birarčen [Birar] and Kumarčen, provides insight into this. S.
 M. Shirokogorov reports of their soul-migration into the under-
 world: "The second river is the Yellow River, after crossing
 which the soul meets with Mongoldai Nakču, i. e. Mongoldai
 'senior of the mother's clan,' which examines the case be-
 fore allowing the soul to cross the Black River beyond which
Inmun-kan reigns" [cited in English] (Psychomental Complex,
 p. 142; as cited in UdG, X, p. 563). Mongoldai, the master
 of the mother's clan in the underworld, here does what the
 bone-master of the dead does in the upper world: he demands
 an accounting and investigates the condition of the dead per-
 son's soul. The result is also the same: the soul becomes free
 for its migration and the corpse free for the burial. I could
 not confirm this underworld correspondence for the bāda among
 the Tujen; at any rate, nothing drew one's attention in this
 direction. Perhaps the extension of the conception into the
 [769] underworld is lacking among them because they practice
 1[ie - the "bone-soul", one of three souls of a
 human being - ANALYST]

[206 cont.]

775 practically no ancestor cult and therefore know of no ancestor
614 spirit like the Tungusic Mongoldai Nakcu. Unconsciously, how-
ever, forgotten conceptions might still have an effect. At any
• 604 rate, a custom that is often explained as thirst for honor and
764 avarice would in this way find a suitable explanation. In the
[769] case of the bāda the principal demands of the mother's brother
are directed at the inviolability of the corpse (= no violent
death) and a costly death-box, as well as splendid prayers for
the dead. When, in connection with the underworld custom of
the Tungus, one assumes that the dead person will reach the
clan-master of the underworld in an honorable, fine condition
and contented, then the care of the earthly clan-master for his
clan members is thereby also documented, and the clan has a
good reputation in the beyond. Father W. Schmidt sought to
interpret similar conditions among other peoples meaningfully,
and; to be sure, in connection with the double interment of the
matriarchal agrarian culture. In the latter the fleshly parts are
allowed to fall to destruction. They are of no significance for
the further existence of the human being. The bones, however,
which are carefully cleaned and then finally interred or supplied
for the cult, are important. Moon-mythological ideas lie at
the bottom of this procedure. The waning moon becomes
thinner and thinner, until finally only [207] a "bone" remains,
but the latter gradually clothes itself again with "flesh" and
grows to become the full moon, a mirror image of the perishing
and becoming of man. According to this conception, the
skeleton is the "essential," the support; see UdG, X, pp. 742 f.
If this meaning of the bones is so harmoniously a part of the
moon-mythological matriarchal agricultural culture, then the
striking arrangement among the Tujen, bones -- mother's
clan -- mother's brother, is also explained. -- The sociological
side of this custom will not be dealt with here.

775 The second soul goes to the western paradise (Tushita)
171 and waits there for a new rebirth. The incarnation into lower
forms is regarded as punishment for a vicious and evil life,
exactly in the sense of the Buddhist-Lamaist wheel of life.
These conceptions, however, do not have much force among

guors and Tibetans of Hsining follow the Chinese custom, performing this celebration in their own way on their sixtieth birthdays. The cycle of age is celebrated according to the wealth of the people with more or less festivity, with a master of ceremony, dinners which, as at marriages, are served around a big fire, songs, Members of the family, relatives, chiefs of the village, friends, are invited and offer their congratulations. Poor people are happy to kill a sheep and to entertain fewer guests. Many Monguors and Tibetans are accustomed to add to this celebration a Lamaist religious rite, inviting a Living Buddha, and ostentatiously offering him substantial alms, receiving his blessings and assuming on that day the duty of observing more Lamaist prescriptions, by becoming a kind of lay-monk or lay-nun. Even poor people add this rite, but act in a more modest way. 527

The essence of the rite of the cycle of age among the Monguors consists in the required assistance of the maternal uncle of the subject of the feast. The latter's presence is so important that in case he has departed, a member of his family must take his place. The ceremony consists in a morning rite attended by all the guests, the honoring by the celebrant of "Heaven and all the spirits" in the open courtyard, with the setting off of firecrackers, immediately followed by his honoring the guardian deity of his family on the altar in the living room. The rich and the poor, and those who add the Lamaist rite, always are faithful to the two essential customs. The fact that at this time some invite a Living Buddha and become a lay-monk is accidental, because most of the Monguors enact the celebration without this Lamaist rite. [604]

The men celebrate their cycle of age in a more or less elaborate way, but the women usually celebrate it on a minor scale. The Lamaist rite is usually performed on the same day, so that the expenses of two feasts are avoided and a big attendance is secured, for the Monguors are afraid few people would arrive for the celebration of a Lamaist rite only. It happens that sometimes a man may enact the Lamaist rite before his sixtieth birthday. In fact no time is fixed for the performance of this rite, it can even be done after death. More men than women perform the Lamaist rite, but young people are not interested in it.

In the early morning of the birthday the guests arrive, the members of the family and the relatives offer the traditional scarf and the "ten breads of longevity" and two jars of wine; sons-in-law add three strings of cash. The subject of the feast, holding incense sticks in his joined hands, led by his maternal uncle, proceeds

the Ch'i-Liang dynasties (479-557) and came in vogue during the T'ang and the Sung. In 729 the imperial birthday was for the first time made a national festival. The institution of letting people join the Buddhist order as monk or nun on the imperial birthday dates from 767; the offering of felicitation to the emperor on his birthday dates from 820. On their birthdays, the T'ang Emperors used to fast, and hence the slaughter of animals was forbidden on these days; this institution dates from 837.

toward the middle of the courtyard where a big fire⁵²⁷ is built, which will not be allowed to go out the whole day. In the presence of all the guests, on the command of the master of the ceremonies, he prostrates himself devoutly three times, honoring "Heaven and all the spirits." Then, led by the maternal uncle and followed by the guests, he enters the living room, and on the command of the master of ceremonies prostrates himself again three times before the house altar, toward the picture of the guardian deity of his family, which usually is a Taoist spirit. Lamps are lit on the adorned altar during the whole day.

Then the celebrant receives congratulations as he sits^[604] on the k'ang, surrounded by the maternal uncle, the chief of the village and the elders, and the members of the family who belong to a higher generation than his own. On the command of the master of ceremonies, first come the members belonging to the generation above his own, bowing their heads and presenting the traditional scarfs. Then arrive the members belonging to his own generation who, in a group, bow their heads and hands nine times and present their scarfs. Then follow the members belonging to younger generations, sons, grandchildren, who, in groups, one after another, prostrate themselves nine times and offer their scarfs. Then the celebrant prostrates himself before his maternal uncle and presents him with a scarf, and all the guests perform the same rite. Finally all the women prostrate themselves in a group before the celebrant and the maternal uncle. Thereafter a cup of wine is presented to the celebrant by the master of ceremonies, who makes the traditional speech with plenty of congratulations. Then follows the breakfast in the courtyard where the guests are accommodated as for the big dinners of marriage and where the celebrated "noodles of longevity" are served.¹⁸

The noodles are made with white flour of wheat cut in long thin filaments. The celebrant, with the maternal uncle and the most outstanding guests, occupies the middle table in the center of the courtyard, on which, in front of him, are put two empty bowls. Wine is presented and congratulations offered by the master of ceremonies, and all the guests one after another take some noodles out of their bowls and put them in the empty bowls of the celebrant, wishing him a happy new cycle of years. The breakfast of the women is served after that of the men. In the afternoon starts the gala dinner like the dinners at the marriages, followed by merrymaking.

LAMAIST RITE

Those who add the Lamaist rite send some youngsters⁵²⁷ of the village on good horses to the lamasery after⁶⁰⁴ breakfast, in order to invite the Living Buddha, who⁷⁷² will arrive at noon. In the meantime, after breakfast, the maternal uncle, in the presence of the guests, starts inquiring about the alms the family has proposed to

¹⁸ Schram, *op. cit.*, 42.

offer to the Living Buddha, and being very exacting, according to the custom, he urges that they should offer five or more horses, two or three hundred sheep, two or three hundred pounds of butter, five hundred dollars. This moment is the very important opportunity for the master of ceremonies to display his utmost oratorical proficiency in behalf of the celebrant who invited him, bringing the amount of required alms to a rational level (which has been fixed beforehand on both sides!). It is a means of making known all over the country the prodigality of the family toward the lamas.

The Living Buddha, with his two or four assistants, is greeted on the threshing floor by all the guests kneeling, holding in their joined hands the incense sticks, and is led to the living room in order to drink tea and rest for a while. Then he comes to sit in the courtyard where he receives the prostrations and scarf of the maternal uncle and of the celebrant, and blesses all the guests, touching each one's head with the ritual red silk tassel attached to a short wooden rod, while the assistants prepare the *torma*. He enters the living room; the celebrant kneels before him, having at his side the maternal uncle. He drinks a first draught of holy water, presented to him by the Living Buddha, and spits the second gulp upon the *torma* placed before him, and swallows a third one. All his sins are spit upon the *torma*; he is interiorly purified, and the *torma* is thrown outside the courtyard.

The Living Buddha, having blown three times upon some spelt, throws it upon him, and the celebrant is smoked with pounded cypress leaves and cones. Holy water is sprinkled upon him with the ritual peacock feathers. Ritual texts are read over him, and the Living Buddha explains before all the guests the obligations inherent in the blessings: to fast on the first and the fifteenth of the month and Wei-sang; to attend the fasting exercises held in the country every year; not to kill any living being, not drink alcohol, eat garlic, leeks, and radishes, nor eat birds and eggs; to abstain from the slightest injustices, to give alms, to pray more Om Mani. Finally a yellow scarf, previously blessed, is put by the Living Buddha on his left shoulder and bound under the right arm. The man has become a lay-monk. He will wear the scarf under or upon his cloths to his dying day, and hang it on the wall at night. Once in a while a very fervent lay-monk is encountered who has shaved his head like the lamas. However, it is reported that many of these lay-monks are not faithful to their obligations, because many perform the rite and invite a Living Buddha in order more to celebrate their cycle of age with greater display and pomp, than to perform an act of religion. Then follows the gala dinner in the courtyard, after which the Living Buddha retires into his private room and remains with the family overnight.

The next morning a breakfast of milk tea, rolls baked in oil, and mutton, is offered to the Living Buddha. While the family kneels in the room, an entire sheep is

presented to the Living Buddha with the scarf. It is 527 the gift for outstanding persons. Then the master of 604 ceremonies makes his traditional speech. After having 792 thanked the Living Buddha, he starts his usual speech of apology: "We are ashamed to have treated the holy man so irreverently, the meat we prepared was tough and tasteless for it was meat of an old animal. The rolls were badly kneaded and hard, and boiled in rancid oil. The k'ang, on which the holy man slept was not heated enough. The holy man could not sleep a wink the whole night. Our k'ang is too short, the saintly man could not stretch out his noble legs. The felt spread on the k'ang was too thin, his holy limbs must be sore. We are a poor family and should like to offer a herd of sheep. We are ashamed to be only able to offer an old horse, saddled with a broken saddle. Our harvest this year was the worst we ever reaped, so we can afford only to offer a couple of sacks of rancid rolls. To add to our frustration, the wool of our sheep was so bad and short this year, that we can only offer a thin felt poorly prepared by an unskilled artisan. The butter we prepared for the lamas and the lamps is nearly all rancid. What we offer to you is more like a gift offered at a burial than a gift fit for these circumstances." Then the maternal uncle and the celebrant prostrate themselves, apologizing and presenting the scarf. The Living Buddha protests that he is very happy, and thanks the family for its prodigality, and promises his blessings.

At the moment of departure the family kneels with incense sticks in their joined hands at the gate of the courtyard; each of the assistant lamas receive two strings of cash, and the Living Buddha takes with him the packet of dollars. After him follow some youngsters with a beautiful horse, saddled with the finest saddle, and a precious rug upon it, with some animals carrying butter and tea for the lamas of the monastery, rolls, meat and sugar, and the news is spread all over the country that so and so offered such and such gifts with an unusual prodigality.

Poor families offer to the Living Buddha fifty strings of cash instead of a horse. The celebrant who belongs to a still poorer family goes at noon with his maternal uncle to the lamasery, in order to see a Living Buddha who performs the rites upon him and is presented with two strings of cash.¹⁷

This information was given me by several masters of ceremonies and Monguors who attended the rites [115] and had themselves performed them.

XIII. DEATH

In connection with the funeral customs of the Mon-761 guors, a few words should be said about their notions concerning the souls, because these have an important bearing upon the funeral customs.

¹⁷ Schröder, *op. cit.*, *Der Altars Segen*, 630.

sion concerning this subject among the Monguors, who assume that they have three souls. 774
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THE FIRST SOUL

The Monguors used to talk about the 'soul of the bones,'¹⁰ which seems to adhere to the bones in general, not to a definite bone. When the bones are broken or split, the soul seems not to be affected. Consequently, when Monguors kill a sheep, they do not take care to avoid the breaking of the bones. The soul seems never to leave the bones, even during life or after death; it is said to be buried with the bones in the grave, and to remain there adhering to them, and to vanish when the bones vanish. Never is it said that this soul harms people, or is harmed in anyway. However, when the shaman calls back the souls of a sick man supposed to be harmed by malignant spirits, or by souls of the deceased, the bone soul is called back with the two others. 774
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This peculiar feeling existing over all Asia concerning the bones is noteworthy. The bones play a large role in the beliefs of the Mongol and Turkish people, to which stock the Monguors belong. The Monguors, as well as the Mongols and Turks, when asking for the name of a man's clan, ask for the name of his "bone," and their saying goes that the bones come from the father and the flesh from the mother. This basic principle is so deeply ingrained in their consciousness that when you ask a man or a woman what their bones are, they will always answer by giving the name of the clan of their father and not that of their mother. Everybody is recognized as belonging to the clan of his father. If you ask for the name of the bone of their mother, they will answer by giving the name of their mother's father's clan and not of their mother's mother's clan, for the bones come from the father. This behavior fits perfectly in the frame of a patriarchal society. 76
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However, it is not known at what time specific facts caused the Monguors to go so far as to call their maternal uncle the "master of the bones" of the children of his sister, to acquiesce to his illogical usurpation of the most basic rights belonging to the family chief in a patriarchal society, to allow the maternal uncle to decide, in definite circumstances, about the life and death of these children, and to be their recognized avenger in case of suicide, caused by maltreatment, and to become the only man who can permit the burial of these children.¹¹ In all nomadic societies in Asia this intrusion is observed on a larger or smaller scale. Even in the Chinese society the maternal uncle plays an important role, presiding over the festivities at marriages and giving permission to bury the children of his sister. The Chinese saying is well known that, when the maternal uncle brings suit at court against the son of his sister, the father of the defendant cannot withstand it, and also the saying that as long as the mother's family (maternal uncle) does not permit burial, the de- 604
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¹⁰ Schröder, *op. cit.*, 2: 205.

¹¹ Schram, Part I: 91.

ceased cannot climb to heaven (the soul cannot leave the body).¹² Like the Monguors, they call a son *Ku-⁶⁰⁴hsueh*, "bone and blood," for his bones come from the father and blood from the mother. Relationship is called *Ku-jou*, "bones and flesh." The examination of the corpse by the maternal uncle before the funeral is called *Yen-ku*, "examining the bones."⁷⁷⁴

However, the usurped rights of the maternal uncle concern only the children of his sister. He is not a chief of a clan, and in all clans men know very well that their clan chief is not a maternal uncle.

All the conditions set by the maternal uncle in order to permit burial find their explanation among Monguors and Chinese in the fear, which both harbor, of the harm which the deceased might cause in case he is not decently buried, and the desire to have a splendid burial for a member of their family, which will honor the family and flatter its pride. The Chinese are extravagantly demanding about precious clothes, a nice coffin, musicians, a big dinner, and a large number of Taoist priests. Monguors are also eager for grandeur, but, having no need for these items, put their unreasonable claims in the form of fantastically large alms for lamaseries, three-fourths of which are never agreed upon. This mentality and these facts prove that religious feeling at that time plays a far lesser part in the discussions than the mania for display and worldly glory. Certainly there are devout Lamaists who, at the time of the death of a member of the family, really like to have prayers said for the deceased, spend a lot of money for entertaining lamas, giving alms, burning lamps. However, this is never done without ostentation and without advertising, and they make these claims on the day of the dinner in such a way that the whole gathering may spread the news.

THE SECOND SOUL

The concept of this soul is more confused than that of the first soul. The second soul is that which will join Buddha in his paradise, or will be condemned by the terrible judge after death to reincarnate, in order to repair injustices. The Monguors at present know perfectly well that after death this soul does not die, and that there is a reward or punishment meted out by the terrible judge. They know perfectly the eighteen hells, from having seen the pictures in the temples and having heard the lamas speak about them. It is one of the most important merits of Lamaism, that it has spread this doctrine to such an extent. The shamans, when performing the spring rites, tell about Erlik, as the lamas tell about the judge of death. The rite which is usually performed in reparation for injustices, so widely spread and practiced, supports the assumption that many

¹² This last saying of the Chinese has no meaning for the Monguors, because, immediately after death, the lama opens a way for the escape of the soul through the bregmatic fontanelle by pulling some hairs from the top of the head. The soul is thus already released before the maternal uncle arrives.

corpse, so say the Monguors. All the neighbors offer their services in order to help carry on the funeral activities, for during the mourning period the members of the family are not allowed to leave their home or to enter the homes of other people, even temples and lamaseries. The whole family of the deceased is tabu. 764

A capable master of ceremonies is invited to direct the activities of the entire funeral. He starts by inviting lamas, usually of the Red Sect, to indicate the place propitious for the cremation. The incineration of a corpse in the wrong place might seal the fate of a whole family, for, according to the philosophy of the Monguors, the soil belongs to the god of the village, who has to be recognized, and from whom a piece of land must be bought in order to enact this rite peacefully. On a place chosen by the staff-spirit of the lama, the lama spreads a brand new felt, upon which he stretches a piece of red cotton eight feet long. Then, squatting on the felt, he offers incense and throws blessed spelt, reciting texts, ringing bells, and beating the drum. In the meantime, the attendants throw copper coins one after another on the felt. The spot is supposed to be bought, the bargain concluded, and paid for on the nail. The lama arises and announces ceremoniously that the god approves the transaction and will protect the family, averting from them any harm on account of the cremation. He fixes four arrows at the four corner of the spot to indicate its limits, and enjoins the attendants to start the building of an oven.

Lamas of the Yellow Sect, more ritualistic than those of the Red Sect, indulge in designing mandalas for which each of them advances his own peculiar explanation.

Monguors never build an oven without having recognized the god-owner of the spot, but many Monguors prefer to invite a Taoist priest or a Chinese geomancer to perform the rite, which is enacted in nearly the same way by them.²²

Then the master of ceremonies determines, with a lama of the Red Sect, the day propitious for the cremation. He invites Red or Yellow lamas to come to say prayers, together with the Living Buddha who will perform the cremation and will arrive the evening before the ceremony. The rite is performed usually on the seventh day after the death, very rarely on the twenty-first or the forty-ninth day. The master of ceremonies, at the time he invites the lamas, offers a gift to the lamasery in order that the community of lamas will say the prayers intended to lead the soul straight to paradise, and to help it avoid all kinds of troubles and vampires on this journey.

According to old Monguors, the most important duty of a master of ceremonies is to go himself to invite the maternal uncle in order to determine with him, in private, the amount of alms to be given to the lamas, and in order to know beforehand at what point he will lower [604] ●

²² Van Oost, *op. cit.*, 130; Kervyn, *op. cit.*, 212.

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his fantastic claims on the day of the funeral. The discussion finished, the traditional cup of wine is poured. ⁷⁶⁴ [604]

The married daughters with their husbands, if they were not present at the death of the father, arrive as soon as possible with the traditional offering of seven big rolls, each one foot in diameter (which must be burned before the deceased), a sheep, paper and incense sticks, and two strings of copper cash. The offerings are not the same in all villages and poor people present smaller rolls and a hen.

GUESTS AND THE MATERNAL UNCLE

The day before the cremation, all the relatives and friends arrive with the traditional twelve steamed rolls and two-hundred copper coins; they prostrate themselves three times, burning paper and incense sticks before the coffin, called the "sedan chair." All await the arrival of the maternal uncle, who goes directly to prostrate himself and burn paper before the coffin, while the women start with the lamentations. The same rite is observed by the Chinese.²³ Some women have a real knack of touching the deepest feelings of those assembled. Many times I listened to these real masterpieces of elegies: "Father, why did you leave us? We love you so much. Father, Father, did we offend you? Forgive us, we love you so much. Mother cries day and night; she does not eat any more. She loves you so much. Father, come back, for mother's sake, lest she die. Father, who will care for us now, care for mother, and for baby brother, etc., we miss you so much. Who will sow the fields and tend the animals, we do not know all these things. Father, why did you leave us? How will we live any more, you were so good to us when we were sick, etc." All these apostrophes were mixed with tears and heavy sighing. Certainly the origin of the elegiac style is to be sought in similar circumstances.

In the presence of the whole assembly, the pretended discussion concerning the alms begins between the maternal uncle and the master of ceremonies. Assurance is given of the love of the family for the deceased, and of the care taken of him during his sickness. Finally permission is given for the cremation. Wine is poured, and the whole family kneels and thanks the maternal uncle. The master of ceremonies offers him, as keepsake and remembrance, a nice piece of woolen felt, some of the best clothes of the deceased, and some pieces of his jewelry. However, the maternal uncle must by custom refuse the gifts. The maternal uncle goes, followed by the whole assembly, to prostrate himself before the corpse. The dinner follows, in the open courtyard, after which the whole group prays Om Mani.

Every evening at dusk, beginning on the day of the death, the villagers, with their children, come to say ⁷⁶⁴

²³ Johannes Ternay, *Familienjustiz in Trauerhaus*, Ethnographische Beiträge aus der Ch'inghai Provinz, *Folklore Studies*, Catholic University of Peking, 1: 103 sqq., 1952.

the great mourning period is over, and the whole group 764
prostrates itself and thanks the master of ceremonies, 765
who will receive twelve rolls.

The incineration ceremonies for poor people are obviously less elaborate. The maternal uncle is invited, a Red lama prays for one day, drives away the souls of the deceased, and receives five-hundred copper coins and some rolls. The people themselves perform the incineration, bury the small coffin, and build the tumulus. [604] 792]

MOURNING CUSTOMS

The Monguors today still call the mourning period 765
the "black period." A son born after the death of his father is still called a "black son." The old custom of wearing black during the mourning period is still noticeable in the clothes worn by men and women, as will be noted.

It is interesting how the use of black as a mourning 765
color has been so widespread in Central Asia among the nomads, even before our era, although in China white was the mourning color from the earliest times. During the Chou dynasty (1122-202 B.C.), while the family dressed in white mourning clothes, the inside of the coffin had to be upholstered with black silk.⁸⁷ In 626 B.C. black was already the mourning color for the barbarians living in north China.⁸⁸ The Scythians (Yüeh chih) in Samarkand, in A.D. 634, wore black clothes at the time of mourning.⁸⁹ In Tibet the head of the king was enveloped with a black turban in the coffin in order to preserve him against evil spirits.⁹⁰ The Liao officials (907-1125) blackened the bright parts of their hats for a few days in mourning for the deceased emperor.⁹¹ The maternal uncle of Emperor K'ang hsi died in Wu-lan-pu-tung during the campaign against Galdan in 1695. His ashes were carried to Peking in a small coffin, put in a sedan chair upholstered with black satin, and in Peking the coffin was placed under a canopy of black satin.⁹² Black is still the mourning color of the Mongols of the Ordos.⁹³ 171

The Monguors practice the great and small mourning. 765
The great mourning consists of men wearing their coats inside out, not buttoned or fastened, girdling the waist with a hemp rope, and undoing their plaited hair and binding it on the neck with a small hemp rope. The women turn their skirts inside out and do not wear the traditional elaborate headdress. The members of the family of a lower generation than the deceased wear the mourning dress. The relatives, sons-in-law, their wives and children, members of a higher generation, do not

⁸⁷ Maspero, *op. cit.*, 184.

⁸⁸ Couvreur, *Tso Chuan* 1: 431. Zottoli, *Cursus Litteraturae Sinicae* 4: 39.

⁸⁹ Wieger, *op. cit.*, 1569.

⁹⁰ Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, 191.

⁹¹ Wittfogel and Feng, *op. cit.*, 283.

⁹² De Mailla, *Histoire de la Chine* 4: 147, Paris, Clousier, 1778.

⁹³ Van Oost, *op. cit.*, 130.

Several times a year youngsters go with the shaman ⁷⁶⁶ to this place at night, and offer a goat to these dangerous souls, propitiating them in order that they may be peaceful. Often on a dark night youngsters with burning torches and whips go to these places. They throw down the head of a goat, and after making noises, throw away their torches and, in deep silence, run home swiftly along another way, in order to avoid being pursued by the souls, and to cheat them. This happens when a member of the family or an animal is taken ill and the possibility exists that the ailment is caused by such souls.

Black shamans, when board or lodging is refused ^[754] them, blow their horn made from a human thigh bone in the direction of these places, calling up all these souls and spirits and ordering them to harm the village. The Monguors are scared to death of such vengeance, especially the vengeance of a young woman who has committed suicide. It is said that the souls of such women are not at peace until they have induced another woman to commit suicide. It is also said that souls of teenagers, for whom prayers have not been said, incite women to commit suicide.

If a suicide occurs, the chief of the village, on behalf of the whole village, invites the shaman, or often three of them, to prevent these additional calamities. For seven days the shamans go at night to the sinister cemetery and dwell there until the morning, beating drums and dancing. They call up these evil souls, talk with them the whole night, flatter, cajole, and comfort them, trying to persuade them to change their avenging minds, and to exchange their ill dispositions for good ones. They snap their whips, and manipulate their knives to frighten them, and finally give them a goat every night, that they may have a good meal and a good time. When the meal is supposed to be finished, the shamans send the spirits back and return to the village.

This custom reveals a thoroughly shamanistic frame of mind, which fears the souls of the dead and imputes to the dead most of the mischiefs and misfortunes which overcome the family; only the shaman can master these foes of the Monguor society.

BURYING OF THE DEAD

More and more, the Monguors are adopting the custom ⁷⁶⁴ of burying their deceased instead of cremating them. When the maternal uncle arrives, the deceased ^[604] has already been put into a Chinese coffin. Before dying, the sick are washed, shaved, and dressed. Men wear an odd number of garments: three pairs of trousers, socks, three gowns, coats, even furs; women wear two sets, and always the traditional skirt of the Monguors which they never wore, but despised during their whole life, for it is said to be impossible to meet the ancestors without the traditional skirt. Some tea and butter are still put in the mouth (a souvenir of their nomadic origin) along with a "pill of longevity," silver,

and jade. A pillow is placed under the head, which is ⁷⁶⁴ covered with a sheet of white paper and a piece of black cloth. The black cloth is a souvenir of former times, because the Chinese use a piece of red cloth.

A Taoist priest fixes the day for the burial. The master of ceremonies invites the maternal uncle (with ^[604] the same discussion as at the incineration ceremonies). Finally, permission is granted for the burial, and the sons and grandsons of the deceased kneel before the maternal uncle, presenting the hammer and the wedges to fasten the cover of the coffin. The maternal uncle fastens one wedge, and allows the others to finish the job. Some among them still practice the Om Mañi rite at night. The offering of the members of the family are still the Monguor offerings, as well as the lamentations. The next day the men follow the coffin on foot to the cemetery, and the women, crying and lamenting, sit on carts. On the third day there follows the ceremony of building the tumulus according to the Monguor custom.

It is not unusual that, at the request of the maternal uncle, some lamas are invited to say prayers at the same time with the Taoist priests. In that case, the lamas say their prayers in a private room next to that of the Taoist priests, since neither cares for the other.

CONFUCIANIST BURIAL OF MONGUORS

Some, among the rich and more educated Monguors, ⁷⁹⁵ follow the Confucianist rite of putting the coffin in the ⁷⁶⁶ courtyard with a red curtain hanging before it. The members of the family kneel before the coffin and a Chinese literatus, wearing a large red satin scarf on his shoulders, makes the sons kneel in the first row. While the musicians play a soft funeral tune, he reads the panegyric for the deceased whom he proposes as a model for the sons. He then places the panegyric before the coffin; next he goes to the row of daughters and then the row of grandchildren, and each time a new piece is read and deposited before the coffin.

The whole group then follows him in a silent procession to the kitchen, where each takes a cup of noodles and deposits it before the coffin, bowing and prostrating. He leads the whole group in procession behind the curtain. The literatus invites the deceased to take his meal. The whole group coughs one delicate cough, and disappears, tiptoeing into the room, in order not to disturb the deceased while dining. The literatus burns the panegyrics and retires.

The literatus, with some Taoist priests, goes to the nearest temple. Men follow him on foot while women sit on the carts and lament. He enters the temple with the priests only, reads a new panegyric, and makes the announcement of the death to the spirit and bows; then the group returns. It is amazing to see how these rude Monguors can behave with courtesy, like people "to the manner born," and how much they like the rite. Burial follows the next day.

[p. 148(A)]

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N
*563 has the privilege of naming his own children and grandchildren.
M
592 When a granddaughter is to be married, the grandfather usually
554 consults her father before taking any action.

B. Marriage and Divorce Customs

N
*563 Among the Mongours marriage is considered not as an optional
M
581 part, but as an extremely necessary part of life. Because of the
562 veneration of ancestors, as with their Chinese neighbors, the Mon-
[769] gours regard male children as a necessity for carrying on the an-
[171] cestral cult. Unmarried sons, or childless sons are considered
a calamity. The poorest families will even sell part of their live-
stock and land or go into debt to get a bride for their son.

N
*563 Marriages usually are arranged by a go-between, frequently
M
581 the maternal uncle of the boy. The brideprice is subject to con-
583 siderable negotiations between the two families. The girl chosen
582 usually is two years older than the boy. The acceptable marriage
age for boys is between 14-16.

N
*563 Clan exogamy is observed among the Mongours. There is ab-
M
581 solute prohibition against marriage within the clan. The rule is
582 sometimes overlooked by the commoners, but it is strictly ob-
565 served among the nobles. Among the commoners, intermarriage
with Tibetans and Chinese has contributed considerably to the
weakening of this rule. In such instances, the clan itself is re-
garded as not being purely preserved. There is a feeling that it
has been penetrated by foreign elements, and therefore the exogamy
rules need not be observed as strictly.

N
*563 Exogamy rules out marriage between children of brothers, but
M
582 does not exclude marriage between the children of a brother and a
sister, because the offspring of the latter belongs to a different
clan.

M
[587] A widowed wife, if living in the setting of the extended family,
usually becomes the second wife of a brother of her late husband.
However, if the brothers have already divided their inheritance
and are living separately, she is free to remarry whomever she
wants.

N
*563 Two exceptional kinds of marriage, probably borrowed from
M
588 the Tibetans, were noted by Schram. One is that of "marriage
to the door post," whereby a girl remains in her family and clan,
but takes lovers and bears children. Her children have her patri-
lineal clan name, remain within the family, and are treated as
members of the patrilineal clan. The other is "marriage to the
belt." A girl, unmarried and living with her own family, has
relations with a guest, who leaves his belt, to which she may be
"married" if she becomes pregnant.

N
*563 The relationship between two families connected by marriage
M
604 is maintained primarily by the maternal uncle. While not being
part of his married sister's new family, he has a powerful influence

N
*563 over his sister's children. His rights in this regard are manifested
M
604 mainly in three cases: (1) upon the natural death of his sister's
children, they cannot be buried without his permission. The
maternal uncle is considered "master of the bones" of the deceased,
and has the right to permit the burial, to impede it or to prevent
it. (2) If they have been murdered or have committed suicide,
he is required to initiate and execute vengeance for the blood of
his sister's child. (3) When they are subject to punishment for
violating the society's rules, the maternal uncle must punish the
children of his sister. Such punishment may range from capital
to very minor forms.

N
*563 Divorce is extremely rare among the Mongours. So, too, are
M
586 cases of repudiation or desertion by the husband. Schram does
not mention the way in which a divorce is finalized, nor how long
a waiting period, if any, after divorce before remarriage is per-
mitted.

N
*563 Cases of adultery are extremely rare in Mongour society.
M
837 The people are engrossed constantly with the problem of making
a living, and they have little time for complicated affairs. The
close physical proximity of life in an extended family makes it
extremely difficult for anyone's lengthy absence or a stranger's
presence in the home to go unnoticed. Schram concludes that
"The morality of the Mongours who live in villages and are occu-
pied with farming, is undoubtedly on a higher standard than that
of the nomad Mongols. Mongour families on the average seemed
to me to be happy families that work hard but enjoy life."

/The Monguors/

*563 N
M first son is an occasion for great rejoicing. Various rituals are
562 performed in connection with the name-giving, and the announce-
852 ment of the birth to the grandparents on both sides. Everyone
[553] in the village is invited to a party, and relatives and friends
bring gifts for the baby.

M
[203] The birth of daughters and younger sons requires less elab-
[604] orate celebration. Invitations are sent to the child's maternal
[603] uncles to be present at the name-giving ceremony, which is
[553] performed by the grandfather. It is thought that a woman's
brothers have a powerful influence over the family into which
her child is born, and therefore they must be notified properly.

M
[184] Poor families also celebrate the birth of the first son, al-
though the ceremonies are less elaborate. If the family cannot
afford the expense of a feast, rich people of the village often
help them. It is not right to allow the birth of a first son to go
uncelebrated, for he is the new link in the ancestral chain, and
it is he who will grow up to make the sacrifices to the clan an-
cestor, an important concern to the Mongours.

N
*563 j. Beard-growing
M A man may start to grow a beard on the first day of the first
302 or second moon of the new year after his thirtieth birthday, but
[593] only if his parents are dead. He must not grow a beard while
[888] his parents are alive, as it would remind his parents of their
advanced age and approaching death.

N
*563 k. Wedding, funeral and grave
M The customs surrounding weddings, funerals and the con-
764 struction of graves are almost the same among the Mongours as
[191] those practiced in traditional China. Their burial, however, is
[190] unique. Under the influence of Lama Buddhism, it has become
the general custom of the Mongours to cremate their dead. The
funeral rites are carried out by lamas. In the olden days, how-
ever, the T'u-ssu and the nobles were always buried.

N
*563 4. Popular beliefs
M Because of the importance of having a son, the pregnant
843 woman is full of hopeful expectation. Everyone in the village
562 knows about the coming event, and is interested in the sex of the
child. It is believed that a male child lies on the left side of the
womb, a female child on the right. The pregnant woman is
watched carefully when she enters a doorway. If she steps over
the threshold with her right foot, she is thought to be carrying a
boy; if with her left foot, a girl. The logic behind this notion is
that a boy makes the left side heavier than the right, so the
mother will instinctively raise her right foot to make a step
upward.

N
*563 If several children in a family have died in infancy, the head
M of a family blessed with many children will be invited to name
553 a newborn child, in the hope that some of his good luck may pass
709 on to the luckless family.
789